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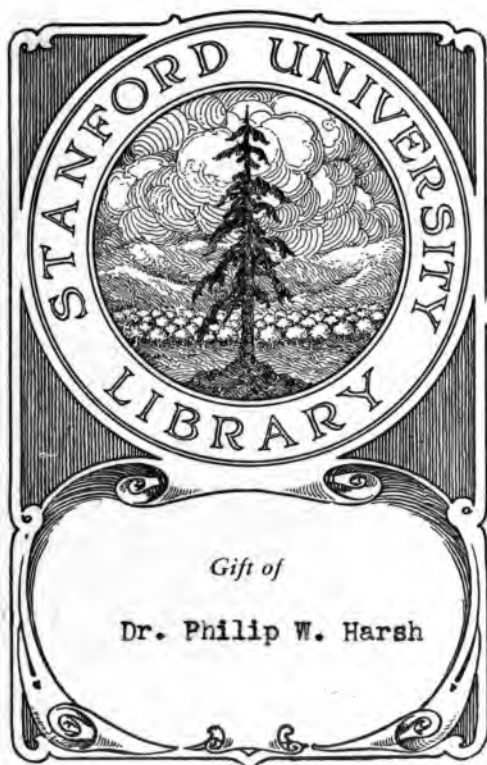
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S. A. R.

VITTORIO EMANUELE,
PRINCIPE DI NAPOLI.

SPERANZA DELL' ITALIA.

QUESTE NOVELLE

DETTATE PER LUI

CONSAORA RIVERENTE

OUIDA

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MOUFFLOU



Gift of

Dr. Philip W. Harsh

matting with busy fingers. But for the most part he did as he liked, and spent most of his time sitting on the parapet of Or San Michele, watching the venders of earthenware at their trucks, or trotting with his crutch (and he could trot a good many miles when he chose) out with Moufflou down a bit of the Stocking-makers' Street, along under the arcades of the Uffizi, and so over the Jewellers' Bridge, and out by byways that he knew into the fields on the hill-side upon the other bank of Arno. Moufflou and he would spend half the day—all the day—out there in daffodil-time; and Lolo would come home with great bundles and sheaves of golden flowers, and he and Moufflou were happy.

His mother never liked to say a harsh word to Lolo, for he was lame through her fault: she had let him fall in his babyhood, and the mischief had been done to his hip never again to be undone. So she never raised her voice to him, though she did often to the others,—to curly-pated Cecco, and pretty black-eyed Dina, and saucy Bice, and sturdy Beppo, and even to the good, manly, hard-working Tasso. Tasso was the mainstay of the whole, though he was but a gardner's lad, working in the green Cascine at small wages. But all he earned he brought home to his mother; and he alone kept in order the lazy, high-tempered Sandro, and he alone kept in check Bice's love of finery, and he alone could with shrewdness and care make both ends meet and put *minestra* always in the pot and bread always in the cupboard.

When his mother thought, as she thought indeed almost ceaselessly, that with a few months he would

be of the age to draw his number, and might draw a high one and be taken from her for three years, the poor soul believed her very heart would burst and break ; and many a day at twilight she would start out unperceived and creep into the great church and pour her soul forth in supplication before the White Tabernacle.

Yet, pray as she would, no miracle could happen to make Tasso free of military service : if he drew a fatal number, go he must, even though he take all the lives of them to their ruin with him.

One morning Lolo sat as usual on the parapet of the church, Moufflou beside him. It was a brilliant morning in September. The men at the hand-barrows and at the stalls were selling the crockery, the silk handkerchiefs, and the straw hats which form the staple of the commerce that goes on round about Or San Michele,—very blithe, good-natured, gay commerce, for the most part, not got through, however, of course, without bawling and screaming, and shouting and gesticulating, as if the sale of a penny pipkin or a twopenny pie-pan were the occasion for the exchange of many thousands of pounds sterling and cause for the whole world's commotion. It was about eleven o'clock ; the poor petitioners were going in for alms to the house of the fraternity of San Giovanni Battista ; the barber at the corner was shaving a big man with a cloth tucked about his chin, and his chair set well out on the pavement ; the sellers of the pipkins and pie-pans were screaming till they were hoarse, "*Un soldo l'uno, due soldi tre !*" big bronze bells were booming till they seemed to clang right up to the deep-blue sky ; some

brethren of the Misericordia went by bearing a black bier ; a large sheaf of glowing flowers—dahlias, zinnias, asters, and daturas—was borne through the huge arched door of the church near St. Mark and his open book. Lolo looked on at it all, and so did Moufflou, and a stranger looked at them as he left the church.

“ You have a handsome poodle there, my little man,” he said to Lolo, in a foreigner’s too distinct and careful Italian.

“ Moufflou is beautiful,” said Lolo, with pride. “ You should see him when he is just washed ; but we can only wash him on Sundays, because then Tasso is at home.”

“ How old is your dog ?”

“ Three years old.”

“ Does he do any tricks ?”

“ Does he !” said Lolo, with a very derisive laugh : “ why, Moufflou can do anything ! He can walk on two legs ever so long ; make ready, present, and fire ; die ; waltz ; beg, of course ; shut a door ; make a wheelbarrow of himself : there is nothing he will not do. Would you like to see him do something ?”

“ Very much,” said the foreigner.

To Moufflou and to Lolo the street was the same thing as home ; this cheery *piazzetta* by the church, so utterly empty sometimes, and sometimes so noisy and crowded, was but the wider threshold of their home to both the poodle and the child.

So there, under the lofty and stately walls of the old church, Lolo put Moufflou through his exercises. They were second nature to Moufflou, as to most

poodles. He had inherited his address at them from clever parents, and, as he had never been frightened or coerced, all his lessons and acquirements were but play to him. He acquitted himself admirably, and the crockery-venders came and looked on, and a sacristan came out of the church and smiled, and the barber left his customer's chin all in a lather while he laughed, for the good folk of the quarter were all proud of Moufflou and never tired of him, and the pleasant, easy-going, good-humored disposition of the Tuscan populace is so far removed from the stupid buckram and whalebone in which the new-angled democracy wants to imprison it.

The stranger also was much diverted by Moufflou's talents, and said, half aloud, "How this clever dog would amuse poor Victor! Would you bring your poodle to please a sick child I have at home!" he said, quite aloud, to Lolo, who smiled and answered that he would. Where was the sick child?

"At the Gran Bretagna; not far off," said the gentleman. "Come this afternoon, and ask for me by this name."

He dropped his card and a couple of francs into Lolo's hand, and went his way. Lolo, with Moufflou scampering after him, dashed into his own house, and stumped up the stairs, his crutch making a terrible noise on the stone.

"Mother, mother! see what I have got because Moufflou did his tricks," he shouted. "And now you can buy those shoes you want so much, and the coffee that you miss so of a morning, and the new linen for Tasso, and the shirts for Sandro."

For to the mind of Lolo two francs was as two millions,—source unfathomable of riches inexhaustible !

With the afternoon he and Moufflou trotted down the arcades of the Uffizi and down the Lung' Arno to the hotel of the stranger, and, showing the stranger's card, which Lolo could not read, they were shown at once into a great chamber, all gilding and fresco and velvet furniture.

But Lolo, being a little Florentine, was never troubled by externals, or daunted by mere sofas and chairs : he stood and looked around him with perfect composure ; and Moufflou, whose attitude, when he was not romping, was always one of magisterial gravity, sat on his haunches and did the same.

Soon the foreigner he had seen in the forenoon entered and spoke to him, and led him into another chamber, where stretched on a couch was a little wan-faced boy about seven years old ; a pretty boy, but so pallid, so wasted, so helpless. This poor little boy was heir to a great name and a great fortune, but all the science in the world could not make him strong enough to run about among the daisies, or able to draw a single breath without pain. A feeble smile lit up his face as he saw Moufflou and Lolo ; then a shadow chased it away.

"Little boy is lame like me," he said, in a tongue Lolo did not understand.

"Yes, but he is a strong little boy, and can move about, as perhaps the sons of his country will make you do," said the gentleman, who was the poor little boy's father. "He has brought you his poodle to amuse you. What a handsome dog ! is it not ?"

"Oh, *buffins!*" said the poor little fellow, stretching out his wasted hands to Moufflou, who submitted his leonine crest to the caress.

Then Lolo went through the performance, and Moufflou acquitted himself ably as ever; and the little invalid laughed and shouted with his tiny thin voice, and enjoyed it all immensely, and rained cakes and biscuits on both the poodle and its master. Lolo crumpled the pastries with willing white teeth, and Moufflou did no less. Then they got up to go, and the sick child on the couch burst into fretful lamentations and outcries.

"I want the dog! I will have the dog!" was all he kept repeating.

But Lolo did not know what he said, and was only sorry to see him so unhappy.

"You shall have the dog to-morrow," said the gentleman, to pacify his little son; and he hurried Lolo and Moufflou out of the room, and consigned them to a servant, having given Lolo five francs this time.

"Why, Moufflou," said Lolo, with a chuckle of delight, "if we could find a foreigner every day, we could eat meat at supper, Moufflou, and go to the theatre every evening!"

And he and his crutch clattered home with great eagerness and excitement, and Moufflou trotted on his four frilled feet, the blue bow with which Bice had tied up his curls on the top of his head, fluttering in the wind. But, alas! even his five francs could bring no comfort at home. He found his whole family wailing and mourning in utterly inconsolable distress.

Tasso had drawn his number that morning, and the number was seven, and he must go and be a conscript for three years.

The poor young man stood in the midst of his weeping brothers and sisters, with his mother leaning against his shoulder, and down his own brown cheeks the tears were falling. He must go, and lose his place in the public gardens, and leave his people to starve as they might, and be put in a tomfool's jacket, and drafted off among cursing and swearing and strange faces, friendless, homeless, miserable! And the mother,—what would become of the mother?

Tasso was the best of lads and the mildest. He was quite happy sweeping up the leaves in the long alleys of the Cascine, or mowing the green lawns under the ilex avenues, and coming home at supper-time among the merry little people and the good woman that he loved. He was quite contented; he wanted nothing, only to be let alone; and they would not let him alone. They would haul him away to put a heavy musket in his hand and a heavy knapsack on his back, and drill him, and curse him, and make him into a human target, a live popinjay.

No one had any heed for Lolo and his five francs, and Moufflou, understanding that some great sorrow had fallen on his friends, sat down and lifted up his voice and howled.

Tasso must go away!—that was all they understood. For three long years they must go without the sight of his face, the aid of his strength, the pleasure of his smile: Tasso must go! When Lolo understood the calamity that had befallen them, he gathered Moufflou

up against his breast, and sat down too on the floor beside him and cried as if he would never stop crying.

There was no help for it: it was one of those misfortunes which are, as we say in Italian, like a tile tumbled on the head. The tile drops from a height, and the poor head bows under the unseen blow. That is all.

"What is the use of that?" said the mother, passionately, when Lolo showed her his five francs. "It will not buy Tasso's discharge."

Lolo felt that his mother was cruel and unjust, and crept to bed with Moufflou. Moufflou always slept on Lolo's feet.

The next morning Lolo got up before sunrise, and he and Moufflou accompanied Tasso to his work in the Cascine.

Lolo loved his brother, and clung to every moment whilst they could still be together.

"Can nothing keep you, Tasso?" he said, despairingly, as they went down the leafy aisles, whilst the Arno water was growing golden as the sun rose.

Tasso sighed.

"Nothing, dear. Unless Gesù would send me a thousand francs to buy a substitute."

And he knew he might as well have said, "If one could coin gold ducats out of the sunbeams on Arno water."

Lolo was very sorrowful as he lay on the grass in the meadow where Tasso was at work, and the poodle lay stretched beside him.

When Lolo went home to dinner (Tasso took his wrapped in a handkerchief) he found his mother very

agitated and excited. She was laughing one moment, crying the next. She was passionate and peevish, tender and jocose by turns; there was something forced and feverish about her which the children felt but did not comprehend. She was a woman of not very much intelligence, and she had a secret, and she carried it ill, and knew not what to do with it; but they could not tell that. They only felt a vague sense of disturbance and timidity at her unwonted manner.

The meal over (it was only bean-soup, and that is soon eaten), the mother said sharply to Lolo, "Your aunt Anita wants you this afternoon. She has to go out, and you are needed to stay with the children: be off with you."

Lolo was an obedient child; he took his hat and jumped up as quickly as his halting hip would let him. He called Moufflou, who was asleep.

"Leave the dog," said his mother, sharply. "'Nita will not have him messing and carrying mud about her nice clean rooms. She told me so. Leave him, I say."

"Leave Moufflou!" echoed Lolo, for never in all Moufflou's life had Lolo parted from him. Leave Moufflou! He stared open-eyed and open-mouthed at his mother. What could have come to her?

"Leave him, I say," she repeated, more sharply than ever. "Must I speak twice to my own children? Be off with you, and leave the dog, I say."

And she clutched Moufflou by his long silky mane and dragged him backwards, whilst with the other hand she thrust out of the door Lolo and Bice.

Lolo began to hammer with his crutch at the door

thus closed on him ; but Bice coaxed and entreated him.

"Poor mother has been so worried about Tasso," she pleaded. "And what harm can come to Moufflou? And I do think he was tired, Lolo ; the Cascine is a long way ; and it is quite true that Aunt 'Nita never liked him."

So by one means and another she coaxed her brother away ; and they went almost in silence to where their aunt Anita dwelt, which was across the river, near the dark-red bell-shaped dome of Santa Spirito.

It was true that her aunt had wanted them to mind her room and her babies whilst she was away carrying home some lace to a villa outside the Roman gate, for she was a lace-washer and clear-starcher by trade. There they had to stay in the little dark room with the two babies, with nothing to amuse the time except the clang of the bells of the church of the Holy Spirit, and the voices of the lemonade-sellers shouting in the street below. Aunt Anita did not get back till it was more than dusk, and the two children trotted homeward hand in hand, Lolo's leg dragging itself painfully along, for without Moufflou's white figure dancing on before him he felt very tired indeed. It was pitch dark when they got to Or San Michele, and the lamps burned dully.

Lolo stumped up the stairs wearily, with a vague, dull fear at his small heart.

"Moufflou, Moufflou!" he called. Where was Moufflou? Always at the first sound of his crutch the poodle came flying towards him. "Moufflou, Moufflou!" he called all the way up the long, dark

twisting stone stair. He pushed open the door, and he called again, "Moufflou, Moufflou !"

But no dog answered to his call.

"Mother, where is Moufflou?" he asked, staring with blinking, dazzled eyes into the oil-lit room where his mother sat knitting. Tasso was not then home from work. His mother went on with her knitting; there was an uneasy look on her face.

"Mother, what have you done with Moufflou, *my* Moufflou?" said Lolo, with a look that was almost stern on his ten-year-old face.

Then his mother, without looking up and moving her knitting-needles very rapidly, said,—

"Moufflou is sold !"

And little Dina, who was a quick, pert child, cried, with a shrill voice,—

"Mother has sold him for a thousand francs to the foreign gentleman."

"Sold him !"

Lolo grew white and grew cold as ice; he stammered, threw up his hands over his head, gasped a little for breath, then fell down in a dead swoon, his poor useless limb doubled under him.

When Tasso came home that sad night and found his little brother shivering, moaning, and half delirious, and when he heard what had been done, he was sorely grieved.

"Oh, mother, how could you do it?" he cried. "Poor, poor Moufflou ! and Lolo loves him so !"

"I have got the money," said his mother, feverishly, "and you will not need to go for a soldier: we can buy your substitute. What is a poodle, that you

mourn about it? We can get another poodle for Lolo."

"Another will not be Moufflou," said Tasso, and yet was seized with such a frantic happiness himself at the knowledge that he would not need go to the army, that he too felt as if he were drunk on new wine, and had not the heart to rebuke his mother.

"A thousand francs!" he muttered; "a thousand francs! *Dio mio!* Who could ever have fancied anybody would have given such a price for a common white poodle? One would think the gentleman had bought the church and the tabernacle!"

"Fools and their money are soon parted," said his mother, with cross contempt.

It was true: she had sold Moufflou.

The English gentleman had called on her while Lolo and the dog had been in the Cascine, and had said that he was desirous of buying the poodle, which had so diverted his sick child that the little invalid would not be comforted unless he possessed it. Now, at any other time the good woman would have sturdily refused any idea of selling Moufflou; but that morning the thousand francs which would buy Tasso's substitute were forever in her mind and before her eyes. When she heard the foreigner her heart gave a great leap, and her head swam giddily, and she thought, in a spasm of longing—if she could get those thousand francs! But though she was so dizzy and so upset she retained her grip on her native Florentine shrewdness. She said nothing of her need of the money; not a syllable of her sore distress. On the contrary, she was coy and wary, affected great reluctance to part with her pet,

invented a great offer made for him by a director of a circus, and finally let fall a hint that less than a thousand francs she could never take for poor Moufflou.

The gentleman assented with so much willingness to the price that she instantly regretted not having asked double. He told her that if she would take the poodle that afternoon to his hotel the money should be paid to her; so she despatched her children after their noonday meal in various directions, and herself took Moufflou to his doom. She could not believe her senses when ten hundred-franc notes were put into her hand. She scrawled her signature, Rosina Calabucci, to a formal receipt, and went away, leaving Moufflou in his new owner's rooms, and hearing his howls and moans pursue her all the way down the staircase and out into the air.

She was not easy at what she had done.

"It seemed," she said to herself, "like selling a Christian."

But then to keep her eldest son at home,—what a joy that was! On the whole, she cried so and laughed so as she went down the Lung' Arno that once or twice people looked at her, thinking her out of her senses, and a guard spoke to her angrily.

Meanwhile, Lolo was sick and delirious with grief. Twenty times he got out of his bed and screamed to be allowed to go with Moufflou, and twenty times his mother and his brothers put him back again and held him down and tried in vain to quiet him.

The child was beside himself with misery. "Moufflou! Moufflou!" he sobbed at every moment; and by

the aching hot little head that had got the malady with the long name, and for the chief part of the time Lolo lay quiet, dull, and stupid, breathing heavily, and then at intervals cried and sobbed and shrieked hysterically for Moufflou.

"Can you not get what he calls for to quiet him with a sight of it?" said the doctor. But that was not possible, and poor Rosina covered her head with her apron and felt a guilty creature.

"Still, you will not go to the army," she said to Tasso, clinging to that immense joy for her consolation. "Only think! we can pay Guido Squarcione to go for you. He always said he would go if anybody would pay him. Oh, my Tasso, surely to keep you is worth a dog's life!"

"And Lolo's?" said Tasso, gloomily. "Nay, mother, it works ill to meddle too much with fate. I drew my number; I was bound to go. Heaven would have made it up to you somehow."

"Heaven sent me the foreigner; the Madonna's own self sent him to ease a mother's pain," said Rosina, rapidly and angrily. "There are the thousand francs safe to hand in the *cassone*, and what, pray, is it we miss? Only a dog like a sheep, that brought gallons of mud in with him every time it rained, and ate as much as any one of you."

"But Lolo?" said Tasso, under his breath.

His mother was so irritated and so tormented by her own conscience that she upset all the cabbage broth into the burning charcoal.

"Lolo was always a little fool, thinking of nothing but the church and the dog and nasty field-flowers,"

she said, angrily. "I humored him ever too much because of the hurt to his hip, and so—and so——"

Then the poor soul made matters worse by dropping her tears into the saucepan, and fanning the charcoal so furiously that the flame caught her fan of cane-leaves, and would have burned her arm had not Tasso been there.

"You are my prop and safety always. Who would not have done what I did? Not Santa Felicita herself," she said, with a great sob.

But all this did not cure poor Lolo.

The days and the weeks of the golden autumn weather passed away, and he was always in danger, and the small close room where he slept with Sandro and Beppo and Tasso was not one to cure such an illness as had now beset him. Tasso went to his work with a sick heart in the Cascine, where the colchicum was all lilac among the meadow grass, and the ashes and elms were taking their first flush of the coming autumnal change. He did not think Lolo would ever get well, and the good lad felt as if he had been the murderer of his little brother.

True, he had had no hand or voice in the sale of Moufflou, but Moufflou had been sold for his sake. It made him feel half guilty, very unhappy, quite unworthy all the sacrifice that had been made for him. "Nobody should meddle with fate," thought Tasso, who knew his grandfather had died in San Bonifazio because he had driven himself mad over the dream-book trying to get lucky numbers for the lottery and become a rich man at a stroke.

It was rapture, indeed, to know that he was free of

the army for a time at least, that he might go on undisturbed at his healthful labor, and get a rise in wages as time went on, and dwell in peace with his family, and perhaps—perhaps in time earn enough to marry pretty flaxen-haired Biondina, the daughter of the barber in the piazzetta. It was rapture indeed ; but then poor Moufflou !—and poor, poor Lolo ! Tasso felt as if he had bought his own exemption by seeing his little brother and the good dog torn in pieces and buried alive for his service.

And where was poor Moufflou ?

Gone far away somewhere south in the hurrying, screeching, vomiting, braying train that it made Tasso giddy only to look at as it rushed by the green meadows beyond the Cascine on its way to the sea.

“If he could see the dog he cries so for, it might save him,” said the doctor, who stood with grave face watching Lolo.

But that was beyond any one’s power. No one could tell where Moufflou was. He might be carried away to England, to France, to Russia, to America,—who could say ? They did not know where his purchaser had gone. Moufflou even might be dead.

The poor mother, when the doctor said that, went and looked at the ten hundred-franc notes that were once like angels’ faces to her, and said to them,—

“Oh, you children of Satan, why did you tempt me ? I sold the poor, innocent, trustful beast to get you, and now my child is dying !”

Her eldest son would stay at home, indeed ; but if this little lame one died ! Rosina Calabucci would have given up the notes and consented never to own

five francs in her life if only she could have gone back over the time and kept Moufflou, and seen his little master running out with him into the sunshine.

More than a month went by, and Lolo lay in the same state, his yellow hair shorn, his eyes dilated and yet stupid, life kept in him by a spoonful of milk, a lump of ice, a drink of lemon-water ; always muttering, when he spoke at all, "Moufflou, Moufflou, *dov' è* Moufflou?" and lying for days together in somnolence and unconsciousness, with the fire eating at his brain and the weight lying on it like a stone.

The neighbors were kind, and brought fruit and the like, and sat up with him, and chattered so all at once in one continuous brawl that they were enough in themselves to kill him, for such is ever the Italian fashion of sympathy in all illness.

But Lolo did not get well, did not even seem to see the light at all, or to distinguish any sounds around him ; and the doctor in plain words told Rosina Calabucci that her little boy must die. Die, and the church so near ! She could not believe it. Could St. Mark, and St. George, and the rest that he had loved so do nothing for him ? No, said the doctor, they could do nothing ; the dog might do something, since the brain had so fastened on that one idea ; but then they had sold the dog.

"Yes ; I sold him !" said the poor mother, breaking into floods of remorseful tears.

So at last the end drew so nigh that one twilight time the priest came out of the great arched door that is next St. Mark, with the Host uplifted, and a little acolyte ringing the bell before it, and passed across the

piazzetta, and went up the dark staircase of Rosina's dwelling, and passed through the weeping, terrified children, and went to the bedside of Lolo.

Lolo was unconscious, but the holy man touched his little body and limbs with the sacred oil, and prayed over him, and then stood sorrowful with bowed head.

Lolo had had his first communion in the summer, and in his preparation for it had shown an intelligence and devoutness that had won the priest's gentle heart.

Standing there, the holy man commended the innocent soul to God. It was the last service to be rendered to him save that very last of all when the funeral office should be read above his little grave among the millions of nameless dead at the sepulchres of the poor at Trebbiano.

All was still as the priest's voice ceased ; only the sobs of the mother and of the children broke the stillness as they kneeled ; the hand of Biondina had stolen into Tasso's.

Suddenly, there was a loud scuffling noise ; hurrying feet came patter, patter, patter up the stairs, a ball of mud and dust flew over the heads of the kneeling figures, fleet as the wind Moufflou dashed through the room and leaped upon the bed.

Lolo opened his heavy eyes, and a sudden light of consciousness gleamed in them like a sunbeam. "Moufflou!" he murmured, in his little thin faint voice. The dog pressed close to his breast and kissed his wasted face.

Moufflou was come home !

And Lolo came home too, for death let go its hold upon him. Little by little, very faintly and flicker-

ingly and very uncertainly at the first, life returned to the poor little body, and reason to the tormented, heated little brain. Moufflou was his physician; Moufflou, who, himself a skeleton under his matted curls, would not stir from his side and looked at him all day long with two beaming brown eyes full of unutterable love.

Lolo was happy; he asked no questions,—was too weak, indeed, even to wonder. He had Moufflou; that was enough.

Alas! though they dared not say so in his hearing, it was not enough for his elders. His mother and Tasso knew that the poodle had been sold and paid for; that they could lay no claim to keep him; and that almost certainly his purchaser would seek him out and assert his indisputable right to him. And then how would Lolo ever bear that second parting?—Lolo, so weak that he weighed no more than if he had been a little bird.

Moufflou had, no doubt, travelled a long distance and suffered much. He was but skin and bone; he bore the marks of blows and kicks; his once silken hair was all discolored and matted; he had, no doubt, travelled far. But then his purchaser would be sure to ask for him, soon or late, at his old home; and then? Well, then if they did not give him up themselves, the law would make them.

Rosina Calabucci and Tasso, though they dared say nothing before any of the children, felt their hearts in their mouths at every step on the stair, and the first interrogation of Tasso every evening when he came from his work was, “Has any one come for Moufflou?”

For ten days no one came, and their first terrors lulled a little.

On the eleventh morning, a feast-day, on which Tasso was not going to his labors in the Cascine, there came a person, with a foreign look, who said the words they so much dreaded to hear: "Has the poodle that you sold to an English gentleman come back to you?"

Yes: his English master claimed him!

The servant said that they had missed the dog in Rome a few days after buying him and taking him there; that he had been searched for in vain, and that his master had thought it possible the animal might have found his way back to his old home: there had been stories of such wonderful sagacity in dogs: anyhow, he had sent for him on the chance; he was himself back on the Lung' Arno. The servant pulled from his pocket a chain, and said his orders were to take the poodle away at once: the little sick gentleman had fretted very much about his loss.

Tasso heard in a very agony of despair. To take Moufflou away now would be to kill Lolo,—Lolo so feeble still, so unable to understand, so passionately alive to every sight and sound of Moufflou, lying for hours together motionless with his hand buried in the poodle's curls, saying nothing, only smiling now and then, and murmuring a word or two in Moufflou's ear.

"The dog did come home," said Tasso, at length, in a low voice; "angels must have shown him the road, poor beast! From Rome! Only to think of it, from Rome! And he a dumb thing! I tell you he is here, honestly: so will you not trust me just so far as this? Will you let me go with you and speak to the English

lord before you take the dog away? I have a little brother sorely ill——”

He could not speak more, for tears that choked his voice.

At last the messenger agreed so far as this: Tasso might go first and see the master, but he would stay here and have a care they did not spirit the dog away, —“for a thousand francs were paid for him,” added the man, “and a dog that can come all the way from Rome by itself must be an uncanny creature.”

Tasso thanked him, went up-stairs, was thankful that his mother was at mass and could not dispute with him, took the ten hundred-franc notes from the old oak *cassone*, and with them in his breast-pocket walked out into the air. He was but a poor working lad, but he had made up his mind to do an heroic deed, for self-sacrifice is always heroic. He went straightway to the hotel where the English *milord* was, and when he had got there remembered that still he did not know the name of Moufflou’s owner; but the people of the hotel knew him as Rosina Calabucci’s son, and guessed what he wanted, and said the gentleman who had lost the poodle was within up-stairs and they would tell him.

Tasso waited some half-hour with his heart beating sorely against the packet of hundred-franc notes. At last he was beckoned up-stairs, and there he saw a foreigner with a mild fair face, and a very lovely lady, and a delicate child who was lying on a couch. “Moufflou! Where is Moufflou?” cried the little child, impatiently, as he saw the youth enter.

Tasso took his hat off, and stood in the door-way

an embrowned, healthy, not ungraceful figure, in his working-clothes of rough blue stuff.

"If you please, most illustrious," he stammered "poor Moufflou has come home."

The child gave a cry of delight; the gentleman and lady one of wonder. Come home! All the way from Rome!

"Yes, he has, most illustrious," said Tasso, gaining courage and eloquence; "and now I want to beg something of you. We are poor, and I drew a bad number, and it was for that my mother sold Moufflou. For myself, I did not know anything of it; but she thought she would buy my substitute, and of course she could; but Moufflou is come home, and my little brother Lolo, the little boy your most illustrious first saw playing with the poodle, fell ill of the grief of losing Moufflou, and for a month has lain saying nothing sensible, but only calling for the dog, and my old grandfather died of worrying himself mad over the lottery numbers, and Lolo was so near dying that the Blessed Host had been brought, and the holy oil had been put on him, when all at once there rushes in Moufflou, skin and bone, and covered with mud, and at the sight of him Lolo comes back to his senses, and that is now ten days ago, and though Lolo is still as weak as a newborn thing, he is always sensible, and takes what we give him to eat, and lies always looking at Moufflou, and smiling, and saying, 'Moufflou! Moufflou!' and, most illustrious, I know well you have bought the dog, and the law is with you, and by the law you claim it; but I thought perhaps, as Lolo loves him so, you would let us keep the dog, and would take back

the thousand francs, and myself I will go and be a soldier, and heaven will take care of them all somehow."

Then Tasso, having said all this in one breathless, monotonous recitative, took the thousand francs out of his breast-pocket and held them out timidly towards the foreign gentleman, who motioned them aside and stood silent.

"Did you understand, Victor," he said, at last, to his little son.

The child hid his face in his cushions.

"Yes, I did understand something: let Lolo keep him; Moufflou was not happy with me."

But he burst out crying as he said it.

Moufflou had run away from him.

Moufflou had never loved him, for all his sweet cakes and fond caresses and platefuls of delicate savory meats. Moufflou had run away and found his own road over two hundred miles and more to go back to some little hungry children, who never had enough to eat themselves, and so, certainly, could never give enough to eat to the dog. Poor little boy! He was so rich and so pampered and so powerful, and yet he could never make Moufflou love him!

Tasso, who understood nothing that was said, laid the ten hundred-franc notes down on a table near him.

"If you would take them, most illustrious, and give me back what my mother wrote when she sold Moufflou," he said, timidly, "I would pray for you night and day, and Lolo would too; and as for the dog, we will get a puppy and train him for your little *signorino*; they can all do tricks, more or less, it comes by nature;

and as for me, I will go to the army willingly ; it is not right to interfere with fate ; my old grandfather died mad because he would try to be a rich man, by dreaming about it and pulling destiny by the ears, as if she were a kicking mule ; only, I do pray of you, do not take away Moufflou. And to think he trotted all those miles and miles, and you carried him by train too, and he never could have seen the road, and he had no power of speech to ask——”

Tasso broke down again in his eloquence, and drew the back of his hand across his wet eyelashes.

The English gentleman was not altogether unmoved.

“ Poor faithful dog ! ” he said, with a sigh. “ I am afraid we were very cruel to him, meaning to be kind. No ; we will not claim him, and I do not think you should go for a soldier ; you seem so good a lad, and your mother must need you. Keep the money, my boy, and in payment you shall train up the puppy you talk of, and bring him to my little boy. I will come and see your mother and Lolo to-morrow. All the way from Rome ! What wonderful sagacity ! what matchless fidelity ! ”

You can imagine, without any telling of mine, the joy that reigned in Moufflou’s home when Tasso returned thither with the money and the good tidings both. His substitute was bought without a day’s delay, and Lolo rapidly recovered. As for Moufflou, he could never tell them his troubles, his wanderings, his difficulties, his perils ; he could never tell them by what miraculous knowledge he had found his way across Italy, from the gates of Rome to the gates of Florence.

But he soon grew plump again, and merry, and his love for Lolo was yet greater than before.

By the winter all the family went to live on an estate near Spezia that the English gentleman had purchased, and there Moufflou was happier than ever. The little English boy is gaining strength in the soft air, and he and Lolo are great friends, and play with Moufflou and the poodle puppy half the day upon the sunny terraces and under the green orange boughs. Tasso is one of the gardeners there; he will have to serve as a soldier probably in some category or another, but he is safe for the time, and is happy. Lolo, whose lameness will always exempt him from military service, when he grows to be a man means to be a florist, and a great one. He has learned to read, as the first step on the road of his ambition.

‘But oh, Moufflou, how *did* you find your way home?’ he asks the dog a hundred times a week.

How indeed!

No one ever knew how Moufflou had made that long journey on foot, so many weary miles; but beyond a doubt he had done it alone and unaided, for if any one had helped him they would have come home with him to claim the reward.

And that you may not wonder too greatly at Moufflou’s miraculous journey on his four bare feet, I will add here two facts known to friends of mine, of whose truthfulness there can be no doubt.

One concerns a French poodle who was purchased in Paris by the friend of my friend, and brought all the way from Paris to Milan by train. In a few days after his arrival in Milan the poodle was missing; and

nothing more was heard or known of him until many weeks later his quondam owner in Paris, on opening his door one morning, found the dog stretched dying on the threshold of his old home.

That is one fact; not a story, mind you, *a fact*.

The other is related to me by an Italian nobleman, who in his youth belonged to the Guardia Nobile of Tuscany. That brilliant corps of elegant gentlemen owned a regimental pet, a poodle also, a fine merry and handsome dog of its kind; and the officers all loved and made much of him, except, alas! the commandant of the regiment, who hated him, because when the officers were on parade or riding in escort the poodle was sure to be jumping and frisking about in front of them. It is difficult to see where the harm of this was, but this odious old martinet vowed vengeance against the dog, and, being of course all powerful in his own corps, ordered the exile from Florence of the poor fellow. He was sent to a farm at Prato, twenty miles from the hills; but very soon he found his life intolerable. He was then sent to Leghorn, but in a week's time had secured a new residence. He was then, by order of the commandant, banished to the island of Sardinia. The commandant never could tell, for he never visited the island, how the poor dog was placed inland there, and in what wonderful way the poor dog contrived to reach the sea and bidden himself home. The commandant was in the time from 1848 to 1850, and he was among his comrades. Now, I can tell you, I think,

quite break yours to hear: alas! the brute of a commandant, untouched by such marvellous cleverness and faithfulness, was his enemy to the bitter end, and, in inexorable hatred, *had him shot!* Oh, when you grow to manhood and have power, use it with tenderness!



A PROVENCE ROSE

A PROVENCE ROSE.

I.

I WAS a Provence rose.

A little slender rose, with leaves of shining green and blossoms of purest white—a little fragile thing, but fair, they said, growing in the casement in a chamber in a street.

I remember my birth-country well. A great wild garden, where roses grew together by millions and tens of millions, all tossing our bright heads in the light of a southern sun on the edge of an old, old city—old as Rome—whose ruins were clothed with the wild fig-tree and the scarlet blossom of the climbing creepers growing tall and free in our glad air of France.

I remember how the ruined aqueduct went like a dark shadow straight across the plains; how the green and golden lizards crept in and out and about among the grasses; how the cicada sang her song in the moist, sultry eves; how the women from the wells came trooping by, stately as monarchs, with their water-jars upon their heads; how the hot hush of the burning noons would fall, and all things droop and sleep except ourselves; how swift among us would dart the

little blue-winged birds, and hide their heads in our white breasts and drink from our hearts the dew, and then hover above us in their gratitude, with sweet faint music of their wings, till sunset came.

I remember—— But what is the use? I am only a rose; a thing born for a day, to bloom and be gathered, and die. So you say: you must know. God gave you all created things for your pleasure and use. So you say.

There my birth was; there I lived—in the wide south, with its strong, quivering light, its radiant skies, its purple plains, its fruits of gourd and vine. I was young; I was happy; I lived: it was enough.

One day a rough hand tore me from my parent stem and took me, bleeding and drooping, from my birth-place, with a thousand other captives of my kind. They bound a score of us up together, and made us a cruel substitute for our cool, glad garden-home with poor leaves, all wet from their own tears, and mosses torn as we were from their birth-nests under the great cedars that rose against the radiant native skies.

Then we were shut in darkness for I know not how long a space; and when we saw the light of day again we were lying with our dear dead friends, the leaves, with many flowers of various kinds, and foliage and ferns and shrubs and creeping plants, in a place quite strange to us—a place filled with other roses and with all things that bloom and bear in the rich days of midsummer; a place which I heard them call the market of the Madeleine. And when I heard that name I knew that I was in Paris.

For many a time, when the dread hand of the reaper had descended upon us, and we had beheld our fairest and most fragrant relatives borne away from us to death, a shiver that was not of the wind had run through all our boughs and blossoms, and all the roses had murmured in sadness and in terror, "Better the worm or the drought, the blight or the fly, the whirlwind that scatters us as chaff, or the waterspout that levels our proudest with the earth—better any of these than the long-lingering death by famine and faintness and thirst that awaits every flower which goes to the Madeleine."

It was an honor, no doubt, to be so chosen. A rose was the purest, the sweetest, the haughtiest of all her sisterhood ere she went thither. But, though honor is well no doubt, yet it surely is better to blow free in the breeze and to live one's life out, and to be, if forgotten by glory, yet also forgotten by pain. Nay, yet: I have known a rose, even a rose who had but one little short life of a summer day to live through and to lose, perish glad and triumphant in its prime because it died on a woman's breast and of a woman's kiss. You see there are roses as weak as men are.

I awoke, I say, from my misery and my long night of travel, with my kindred beside me in exile, on a flower-stall of the Madeleine.

It was noon—the pretty place was full of people: it was June, and the day was brilliant. A woman of Picardy sat with us on the board before her—a woman with blue eyes and ear-rings of silver, who bound us together in fifties and hundreds into those sad gather-

ings of our pale ghosts which in your human language you have called "bouquets." The loveliest and greatest among us suffered decapitation, as your Marie Stuarts and Marie Antoinettes did, and died at once to have their beautiful bright heads impaled—a thing of death, a mere mockery of a flower—on slender spears of wire. I, a little white and fragile thing, and very young, was in no way eminent enough among my kind to find that martyrdom which as surely awaits the loveliest of our roses as it awaits the highest fame of your humanity.

I was bound up among a score of others with ropes of gardener's bass to chain me amidst my fellow-prisoners, and handed over by my jailer with the silver ear-rings to a youth who paid for us with a piece of gold—whether of great or little value I know not now. None of my own roses were with me: all were strangers. You never think, of course, that a little rose can care for its birthplace or its kindred; but you err.

O fool! Shall we not care for one another?—we who have so divine a life in common, who together sleep beneath the stars, and together sport in the summer wind, and together listen to the daybreak singing of the birds, whilst the world is dark and deaf in slumber—we who know that we are all of heaven that God, when He called away His angels, bade them leave on the sin-stained, weary, sickly earth to now and then make man remember Him!

You err. We love one another well, and if we may not live in union, we crave at least in union to droop

and die. It is seldom that we have this boon. Wild flowers can live and die together; so can the poor among you; but we of the cultivated garden needs must part and die alone.

All the captives with me were strangers: haughty, scentless pelargoniums; gardenias, arrogant even in their woe; a knot of little, humble forget-me-nots, ashamed in the grand company of patrician prisoners; a *stephanotis*, virginal and pure, whose dying breath was peace and sweetness; and many sprays of myrtle born in Rome, whose classic leaves wailed Tasso's lamentation as they went.

I must have been more loosely fettered than the rest were, for in the rough, swift motion of the youth who bore us my bonds gave way, and I fell through the silver transparency of our prison-house, and dropped stunned upon the stone pavement of a street.

There I lay long, half senseless, praying, so far as I had consciousness, that some pitying wind would rise and waft me on his wings away to some shadow, some rest, some fresh, cool place of silence.

I was tortured with thirst; I was choked with dust; I was parched with heat.

The sky was as brass, the stones as red-hot metal; the sun scorched like flame on the glare of the staring walls; the heavy feet of the hurrying crowd tramped past me black and ponderous: with every step I thought my death would come under the crushing weight of those clanging heels.

It was five seconds, five hours—which I know not. The torture was too horrible to be measured by time.

I must have been already dead, or at the very gasp of death, when a cool, soft touch was laid on me: I was gently lifted, raised to tender lips, and fanned with a gentle, cooling breath—breath from the lips that had kissed me.

A young girl had found and rescued me—a girl of the people, poor enough to deem a trampled flower a treasure-trove.

She carried me very gently, carefully veiling me from sun and dust as we went; and when I recovered perception I was floating in a porcelain bath on the surface of cool, fresh water, from which I drank eagerly as soon as my sickly sense of faintness passed away.

My bath stood on the lattice-sill of a small chamber: it was, I knew afterwards, but a white pan of common earthenware, such as you buy for two sous and put in your bird-cages. But no bath of ivory and pearl and silver was ever more refreshing to imperial or patrician limbs than was that little clean and snowy patty-pan to me.

Under its reviving influences I became able to lift my head and raise my leaves and spread myself to the sunlight, and look round me. The chamber was in the roof, high above the traffic of the passage-way beneath: it was very poor, very simple, furnished with few and homely things. True, to all our nation of flowers it matters little, when we are borne into captivity, whether the prison-house which receives us be palace or garret. Not to us can it signify whether we perish in Sevres vase of royal blue or in kitchen pipkin

of brown ware. Your lordliest halls can seem but dark, pent, noisome dungeons to creatures born to live on the wide plain, by the sunlit meadow, in the hedge-row, or the forest, or the green, leafy garden-way ; tossing always in the joyous winds, and looking always upward to the open sky.

But it is of little use to dwell on this. You think that flowers, like animals, were only created to be used and abused by you, and that we, like your horse and dog, should be grateful when you honor us by slaughter or starvation at your hands. To be brief, this room was very humble, a mere attic, with one smaller still opening from it ; but I scarcely thought of its size or aspect. I looked at nothing but the woman who had saved me. She was quite young ; not very beautiful, perhaps, except for wonderful soft azure eyes and a mouth smiling and glad, with lovely curves to the lips, and hair dark as a raven's wing, which was braided and bound close to her head. She was clad very poorly, yet with an exquisite neatness and even grace ; for she was of the people no doubt, but of the people of France. Her voice was very melodious : she had a silver cross on her bosom ; and though her face was pale, it had health.

She was my friend, I felt sure. Yes, even when she held me and pierced me with steel and murmured over me, "They say roses are so hard to rear so, and you are such a little thing ; but do grow to a tree and live with me. Surely, you can if you try."

She had wounded me sharply and thrust me into a tomb of baked red clay filled with black and heavy

mould. But I knew that I was pierced to the heart that I might—though only a little offshoot gathered to die in a day—strike root of my own and be strong, and carry a crown of fresh blossoms. For she but dealt with me as your world deals with you, when your heart aches and your brain burns, and Fate stabs you, and says in your ear, “O fool! to be great you must suffer.” You to your fate are thankless, being human; but I, a rose, was not.

I tried to feel not utterly wretched in that little dull clay cell: I tried to forget my sweet glad southern birthplace, and not to sicken and swoon in the noxious gases of the city air. I did my best not to shudder in the vapor of the stove, and not to grow pale in the clammy heats of the street, and not to die of useless lamentation for all that I had lost—for the noble tawny sunsets, and the sapphire blue skies, and the winds all fragrant with the almond-tree flowers, and the sunlight in which the yellow orioles flashed like gold.

I did my best to be content and show my gratitude all through a parching autumn and a hateful winter; and with the spring a wandering wind came and wooed me with low, amorous whispers—came from the south, he said; and I learned that even in exile in an attic window love may find us out and make for us a country and a home.

So I lived and grew and was happy there against the small, dim garret panes, and my lover from the south came, still faithful, year by year; and all the voices round me said that I was fair—pale indeed, and

fragile of strength, as a creature torn from its own land and all its friends must be; but contented and glad, and grateful to the God who made me, because I had not lived in vain, but often saw sad eyes, half blinded with toil and tears, smile at me when they had no other cause for smiles.

"It is bitter to be mewed in a city," said once to me an old, old vine who had been thrust into the stones below and had climbed the house wall, Heaven knew how, and had lived for half a century jammed between buildings, catching a gleam of sunshine on his dusty leaves once perhaps in a whole summer. "It is bitter for us. I would rather have had the axe at my root and been burned. But perhaps without us the poorest of people would never remember the look of the fields. When they see a green leaf they laugh a little, and then weep—some of them. We, the trees and the flowers, live in the cities as those souls among them whom they call poets live in the world—exiled from heaven that by them the world may now and then bethink itself of God."

And I believe that the vine spoke truly. Surely, he who plants a green tree in a city way plants a thought of God in many a human heart arid with the dust of travail and clogged with the greeds of gold. So, with my lover the wind and my neighbor the vine, I was content and patient, and gave many hours of pleasure to many hard lives, and brought forth many a blossom of sweetness in that little nook under the roof.

Had my brothers and sisters done better, I wonder, living in gilded balconies or dying in jewelled hands?

I cannot say : I can only tell of myself.

The attic in which I found it my fate to dwell was very high in the air, set in one of the peaked roofs of the quarter of the Luxembourg, in a very narrow street, populous and full of noise, in which people of all classes, except the rich, were to be found—in a medley of artists, students, fruit-sellers, workers in bronze and ivory, seamstresses, obscure actresses, and all the creators, male and female, of the thousand and one airy arts of elegant nothingness which a world of pleasure demands as imperatively as a world of labor demands its bread.

It would have been a street horrible and hideous in any city save Rome or Paris : in Rome it would have been saved by color and antiquity—in Paris it was saved by color and grace. Just a flash of a bright drapery, just a gleam of a gay hue, just some tender pink head of a hydrangea, just some quaint curl of some gilded woodwork, just the green glimmer of my friend the vine, just the snowy sparkle of his neighbor the water-spout,—just these, so little and yet so much, made the crooked passage a bearable home, and gave it a kinship with the glimpse of the blue sky above its pent roofs.

O wise and true wisdom ! to redeem poverty with the charms of outline and of color, with the green bough and the song of running water, and the artistic harmony which is as possible to the rough-hewn pine-wood as in the polished ebony. “It is of no use !” you cry. O fools ! Which gives you perfume—we, the roses, whose rich hues and matchless grace no

human artist can imitate, or the rose-trémière, which mocks us, standing stiff and gaudy and scentless and erect? Grace and pure color and cleanliness are the divinities that redeem the foulness and the ignorance and the slavery of your crushed, coarse lives when you have sight enough to see that they are divine.

In my little attic, in whose window I have passed my life, they were known gods and honored; so that, despite the stovepipe, and the poverty, and the little ill-smelling candle, and the close staircase without, with the rancid oil in its lamps and its fetid faint odors, and the refuse, and the gutters, and the gas in the street below, it was possible for me, though a rose of Provence and a rose of the open air freeborn, to draw my breath in it and to bear my blossoms, and to smile when my lover the wind roused me from sleep with each spring, and said in my ear, "Arise! for a new year has come." Now, to greet a new year with a smile, and not a sigh, one must be tranquil, at least, if not happy.

Well, I and the lattice, and a few homely plants of saxafrage and musk and balsam who bloomed there with me, and a canary who hung in a cage among us, and a rustic creeper who clung to a few strands of strained string and climbed to the roof and there talked all day to the pigeons,—we all belonged to the girl with the candid sweet eyes, and by name she was called Lili Kerrouel, and for her bread she gilded and colored those little cheap boxes for sweetmeats that they sell in the wooden booths at the fairs on the boulevards, while the mirlitons whirl in their giddy

go-rounds and the merry horns of the charlatans challenge the populace. She was a girl of the people: she could read, but I doubt if she could write. She had been born of peasant parents in a Breton hamlet, and they had come to Paris to seek work, and had found it for a while and prospered; and then had fallen sick and lost it, and struggled for a while, and then died, running the common course of so many lives among you. They had left Lili alone at sixteen, or rather worse than alone—with an old grandam, deaf and quite blind, who could do nothing for her own support, but sat all day in a wicker chair by the lattice or the stove, according as the season was hot or cold, and mumbled a little inarticulately over her worn wooden beads.

Her employers allowed Lili to bring these boxes to decorate at home, and she painted at them almost from dawn to night. She swept, she washed, she stewed, she fried, she dusted; she did all the housework of her two little rooms; she tended the old woman in all ways; and she did all these things with such cleanliness and deftness that the attics were wholesome as a palace; and though her pay was very small, she yet found means and time to have her linen spotless and make her pots and pans shine like silver and gold, and to give a grace to all the place, with the song of a happy bird and the fragrance of flowers that blossomed their best and their sweetest for her sake, when they would fain have withered to the root and died in their vain longing for the pure breath of the fields and the cool of a green woodland world.

It was a little, simple, hard life, no doubt—a life one would have said scarce worth all the trouble it took to get bread enough to keep it going. A hard life, coloring always the same eternal little prints all day long, no matter how sweet the summer day might be, or how hot the tired eyes.

A hard life, with all the wondrous, glorious, wasteful, splendid life of the beautiful city around it in so terrible a contrast; with the roll of the carriages day and night on the stones beneath, and the pattering of the innumerable feet below, all hurrying to some pleasure, and every moment some burst of music or some chime of bells or some ripple of laughter on the air. A hard life, sitting one's self in a little dusky garret in the roof, and straining one's sight for two sous an hour, and listening to an old woman's childish mutterings and reproaches, and having always to shake the head in refusal of the neighbors' invitations to a day in the woods or a sail on the river. A hard life, no doubt, when one is young and a woman, and has soft, shining eyes and a red, curling mouth.

And yet Lili was content.

Content, because she was a French girl; because she had always been poor, and thought two sous an hour, riches; because she loved the helpless old creature whose senses had all died while her body lived on; because she was an artist at heart, and saw beautiful things round her even when she scoured her brasses and washed down her bare floor.

Content, because with it all she managed to gather a certain "sweetness and light" into her youth of toil;

and when she could give herself a few hours' holiday, and could go beyond the barriers, and roam a little in the wooded places, and come home with a knot of primroses or a plume of lilac in her hands, she was glad and grateful as though she had been given gold and gems.

Ah! In the lives of you who have wealth and leisure we, the flowers, are but one thing among many: we have a thousand rivals in your porcelains, your jewels, your luxuries, your intaglios, your mosaics, all your treasures of art, all your baubles of fancy. But in the lives of the poor we are alone: we are all the art, all the treasure, all the grace, all the beauty of outline, all the purity of hue that they possess: often we are all their innocence and all their religion too.

Why do you not set yourselves to make us more abundant in those joyless homes, in those sunless windows?

Now, this street of hers was very narrow: it was full of old houses, that nodded their heads close together as they talked, like your old crones over their fireside gossip.

I could, from my place in the window, see right into the opposite garret window. It had nothing of my nation in it, save a poor colorless stone-wort, who got a dismal living in the gutter of the roof, yet who too, in his humble way, did good and had his friends, and paid the sun and the dew for calling him into being. For on that rain-pipe the little dusty, thirsty sparrows would rest and bathe and plume themselves, and bury their beaks in the pale stone-crop, and twitter with one

another joyfully, and make believe that they were in some green and amber meadow in the country in the cowslip time.

I did not care much for the stone-crop or the sparrows; but in the third summer of my captivity there with Lili the garret casement opposite stood always open, as ours did, and I could watch its tenant night and day as I chose.

He had an interest for me.

He was handsome, and about thirty years old; with a sad and noble face, and dark eyes full of dreams, and cheeks terribly hollow, and clothes terribly threadbare.

He thought no eyes were on him when my lattice looked dark, for his garret, like ours, was so high that no glance from the street ever went to it. Indeed, when does a crowd ever pause to look at a garret, unless by chance a man have hanged himself out of its window? That in thousands of garrets men may be dying by inches for lack of bread, lack of hope, lack of justice, is not enough to draw any eyes upward to them from the pavement.

He thought himself unseen, and I watched him many a long hour of the summer night when I sighed at my square open pane in the hot, sulphurous mists of the street, and tried to see the stars and could not. For, between me and the one small breadth of sky which alone the innumerable roofs left visible, a vintner had hung out a huge gilded imperial crown as a sign on his roof-tree; and the crown, with its sham gold turning black in the shadow, hung between me and the planets.

I knew that there must be many human souls in a

like plight with myself, with the light of heaven blocked from them by a gilded tyranny, and yet I sighed and sighed and sighed, thinking of the white pure stars of Provence throbbing in her violet skies.

A rose is hardly wiser than a poet, you see: neither rose nor poet will be comforted, and be content to dwell in darkness because a crown of tinsel swings on high.

Well, not seeing the stars as I strove to do, I took refuge in sorrow for my neighbor. It is well for your poet when he turns to a like resource. Too often I hear he takes, instead, to the wine-cellar which yawns under the crown that he curses.

My neighbor, I soon saw, was poorer even than we were. He was a painter, and he painted beautiful things. But his canvases and the necessities of his art were nearly all that his empty attic had in it; and when, after working many hours with a wretched glimmer of oil, he would come to his lattice and lean out, and try as I had tried to see the stars, and fail as I had failed, I saw that he was haggard, pallid, and weary unto death with two dire diseases—hunger and ambition.

He could not see the stars because of the crown, but in time, in those long midsummer nights, he came to see a little glowworm among my blossoms, which in a manner, perhaps, did nearly as well.

He came to notice Lili at her work. Often she had to sit up half the night to get enough coloring done to make up the due amount of labor; and she sat at her little deal table, with her little feeble lamp, with her beautiful hair coiled up in a great knot and her pretty

head drooping so wearily—as we do in the long days of drought—but never once looking off, nor giving way to rebellion or fatigue, though from the whole city without there came one ceaseless sound, like the sound of an endless sea; which truly it was—the sea of pleasure.

Not for want of coaxings, not for want of tempters, various and subtle, and dangers often and perilously sweet, did Lili sit there in her solitude earning two sous an hour with straining sight and aching nerves that the old paralytic creature within might have bed and board without alms. Lili had been sore beset in a thousand ways, for she was very fair to see; but she was proud and she was innocent, and she kept her courage and her honor; yea, though you smile—though she dwelt under an attic roof, and that roof a roof of Paris.

My neighbor, in the old gabled window over the way, leaning above his stone-wort, saw her one night thus at work by her lamp, with the silver ear-rings, that were her sole heirloom and her sole wealth, drooped against the soft hues and curves of her graceful throat.

And when he had looked once, he looked every night, and found her there; and I, who could see straight into his chamber, saw that he went and made a picture of it all—of me, and the bird in the cage, and the little old dusky lamp, and Lili with her silver ear-rings and her pretty, drooping head.

Every day he worked at the picture, and every night he put his light out and came and sat in the dark square of his lattice, and gazed across the street through

my leaves and my blossoms at my mistress. Lili knew nothing of this watch which he kept on her: she had put up a little blind of white net-work, and she fancied that it kept out every eye when it was up; and often she took even that away, because she had not the heart to deprive me of the few faint breezes which the sultry weather gave us.

She never saw him in his dark hole in the old gable there, and I never betrayed him—not I. Roses have been the flowers of silence ever since the world began. Are we not the flowers of love?

“Who is he?” I asked of my gossip the vine. The vine had lived fifty years in the street, and knew the stories and sorrows of all the human bees in the hive.

“He is called René Claude,” said the vine. “He is a man of genius. He is very poor.”

“You use synonyms,” murmured the old balsam who heard.

“He is an artist,” the vine continued. “He is young. He comes from the south. His people are guides in the Pyrenees. He is a dreamer of dreams. He has taught himself many things. He has eloquence too. There is a little club at the back of the house which I climb over. I throw a tendril or two in at the crevices and listen. The shutters are closed. It is forbidden by law for men to meet so. There René speaks by the hour, superbly. Such a rush of words, such a glance, such a voice, like the roll of musketry in anger, like the sigh of music in sadness! Though I am old, it makes the little sap there is left in me thrill and grow warm. He paints beautiful things, too; so

the two swallows say who build under his eaves ; but I suppose it is not of much use : no one believes in him, and he almost starves. He is young yet, and feels the strength in him, and still strives to do great things for the world that does not care a jot whether he lives or dies. He will go on so a little longer. Then he will end like me. I used to try and bring forth the best grapes I could, though they had shut me away from any sun to ripen them and any dews to cleanse the dust from them. But no one cared. No one gave me a drop of water to still my thirst, nor pushed away a brick to give me a ray more of light. So I ceased to try and produce for their good ; and I only took just so much trouble as would keep life in me myself. It will be the same with this man."

I, being young and a rose, the flower loved of the poets, thought the vine was a cynic, as many of you human creatures grow to be in the years of your age when the leaves of your life fall sere. I watched René long and often. He was handsome, he suffered much ; and when the night was far spent he would come to his hole in the gable and gaze with tender, dreaming eyes past my pale foliage to the face of Lili. I grew to care for him, and I disbelieved the prophecy of the vine ; and I promised myself that one summer or another, near or far, the swallows, when they came from the tawny African world to build in the eaves of the city, would find their old friend flown and living no more in a garret, but in some art-palace where men knew his fame.

So I dreamed—I, a little white rose, exiled in the

passage of a city, seeing the pale moonlight reflected on the gray walls and the dark windows, and trying to cheat myself by a thousand fancies into the faith that I once more blossomed in the old sweet leafy garden-ways in Provence.

One night—the hottest night of the year—Lili came to my side by the open lattice. It was very late: her work was done for the night. She stood a moment, with her lips rested softly on me, looking down on the pavement that glistened like silver in the sleeping rays of the moon.

For the first time she saw the painter René watching her from his niche in the gable, with eyes that glowed and yet were dim.

I think women foresee with certain prescience when they will be loved. She drew the lattice quickly to, and blew the lamp out: she kissed me in the darkness. Because her heart was glad or sorry? Both, perhaps.

Love makes one selfish. For the first time she left my lattice closed all through the oppressive hours until daybreak.

“Whenever a woman sees anything out of her window that makes her eager to look again, she always shuts the shutter. Why, I wonder?” said the balsam to me.

“That she may peep unsuspected through a chink,” said the vine round the corner, who could overhear.

It was profane of the vine, and in regard to Lili untrue. She did not know very well, I dare say, why she withdrew herself on that sudden impulse, as the pimpernel shuts itself up at the touch of a raindrop.

But she did not stay to look through a crevice : she went straight to her little narrow bed, and told her beads and prayed, and slept till the cock crew in a stable near and the summer daybreak came.

She might have been in a chamber all mirror and velvet and azure and gold in any one of the ten thousand places of pleasure, and been leaning over gilded balconies under the lime leaves, tossing up little paper balloons in the air for gay wagers of love and wine and jewels. Pleasure had asked her more than once to come down from her attic and go with its crowds ; for she was fair of feature and lithe of limb, though only a work-girl of Paris. And she would not, but slept here under the eaves, as the swallows did.

“ We have not seen enough, little rose, you and I,” she would say to me with a smile and a sigh. “ But it is better to be a little pale, and live a little in the dark, and be a little cramped in a garret window, than to live grand in the sun for a moment, and the next to be tossed away in a gutter. And one can be so happy anyhow—almost anyhow !—when one is young. If I could only see a very little piece more of the sky, and get every Sunday out to the dear woods, and live one floor lower, so that the winters were not quite so cold and the summers not quite so hot, and find a little more time to go to mass in the cathedral, and be able to buy a pretty blue-and-white home of porcelain for you, I should ask nothing more of the blessed Mary—nothing more upon earth.”

She had had the same simple bead-roll of innocent wishes ever since the first hour that she had raised me

from the dust of the street ; and it would, I doubt not, have remained her only one all the years of her life, till she should have glided down into a serene and cheerful old age of poverty and labor under that very same roof, without the blessed Mary ever deigning to hearken or answer. Would have done so if the painter René could have seen the stars, and so had not been driven to look instead at the glowworm through my leaves.

But after that night on which she shut to the lattice so suddenly, I think the bead-roll lengthened—lengthened, though for some time the addition to it was written on her heart in a mystical language which she did not try to translate even to herself—I suppose fearing its meaning.

René made approaches to his neighbor's friendship soon after that night. He was but an art-student, the son of a poor mountaineer, and with scarce a thing he could call his own except an easel of deal, a few plaster casts, and a bed of straw. She was but a working-girl, born of Breton peasants, and owning as her sole treasures two silver ear-rings and a white rose.

But for all that, no courtship could have been more reverential on the one side or fuller of modest grace on the other if the scene of it had been a palace of princes or a château of the nobles.

He spoke very little.

The vine had said that at the club round the corner he was very eloquent, with all the impassioned and fierce eloquence common to men of the south. But with Lili he was almost mute. The vine, who knew

human nature well—as vines always do, since their juices unlock the secret thoughts of men and bring to daylight their darkest passions—the vine said that such silence in one by nature eloquent showed the force of his love and its delicacy.

This may be so: I hardly know. My lover the wind, when he is amorous, is loud, but then it is true his loves are not often very constant.

René chiefly wooed her by gentle service. He brought her little lovely wild flowers, for which he ransacked the woods of St. Germain and Meudon. He carried the billets of her fire-wood up the seven long, twisting, dirty flights of stairs. He fought for her with the wicked old portress at the door downstairs. He played to her in the gray of the evening on a quaint simple flute, a relic of his boyhood, the sad, wild, touching airs of his own southern mountains—played at his open window while the lamps burned through the dusk, till the people listened at their doors and casements and gathered in groups in the passage below, and said to one another, “How clever he is!—and he starves.”

He did starve very often, or at least he had to teach himself to keep down hunger with a morsel of black chaff-bread and a stray roll of tobacco. And yet I could see that he had become happy.

Lili never asked him within her door. All the words they exchanged were from their open lattices, with the space of the roadway between them.

I heard every syllable they spoke, and they were on the one side most innocent and on the other most rev-

erential. Ay, though you may not believe it—you who know the people of Paris from the travesties of theatres and the slanders of salons.

And all this time secretly he worked on at her portrait. He worked out of my sight and hers, in the inner part of his garret, but the swallows saw and told me. There are never any secrets between birds and flowers.

We used to live in Paradise together, and we love one another as exiles do ; and we hold in our cups the raindrops to slake the thirst of the birds, and the birds in return bring to us from many lands and over many waters tidings of those lost ones who have been torn from us to strike the roots of our race in far-off soils and under distant suns.

Late in the summer of the year, one wonderful fête-day, Lili did for once get out to the woods, the old kindly green woods of Vincennes.

A neighbor on a lower floor, a woman who made poor scentless, senseless, miserable imitations of all my race in paper, sat with the old bedridden grandmother while Lili took her holiday—so rare in her life, though she was one of the motes in the bright champagne of the dancing air of Paris. I missed her sorely on each of those few sparse days of her absence, but for her I rejoiced.

"Je reste : tu 't 'en vas," says the rose to the butterfly in the poem ; and I said so in my thoughts to her.

She went to the broad level grass, to the golden fields of the sunshine, to the sound of the bees murmuring over the wild purple thyme, to the sight of the great snowy clouds slowly sailing over the sweet blue

freedom of heaven—to all the things of my birthright and my deathless remembrance—all that no woman can love as a rose can love them.

But I was not jealous: nay, not though she had cramped me in a little earth-bound cell of clay. I envied wistfully indeed, as I envied the swallows their wings which cleft the air, asking no man's leave for their liberty. But I would not have remained a swallow's pinion had I had the power, and I would not have abridged an hour of Lili's freedom. Flowers are like your poets: they give ungrudgingly, and, like all lavish givers, are seldom recompensed in kind.

We cast all our world of blossom, all our treasury of fragrance, at the feet of the one we love; and then, having spent ourselves in that too abundant sacrifice, you cry, "A yellow, faded thing!—to the dust-hole with it!" and root us up violently and fling us to rot with the refuse and offal; not remembering the days when our burden of beauty made sunlight in your darkest places, and brought the odors of a lost paradise to breathe over your bed of fever.

Well, there is one consolation. Just so likewise do you deal with your human wonder-flower of genius.

Lili went for her day in the green midsummer world—she and a little blithe, happy-hearted group of young work-people—and I stayed in the garret window, hot and thirsty, and drooping and pale, choked by the dust that drifted up from the pavement, and hearing little all day long save the quarrels of the sparrows and the whirr of the engine-wheels in a baking-house close at hand.

For it was some great day or other, when all Paris was out *en fête*, and every one was away from his or her home, except such people as the old bedridden woman and the cripple who watched her. So, at least, the white roof-pigeons told me, who flew where they listed, and saw the whole splendid city beneath them—saw all its glistening of arms and its sheen of palace roofs, all its gilded domes and its white, wide squares, all its crowds, many-hued as a field of tulips, and its flashing eagles golden as the sun.

When I had been alone two hours, and whilst the old building was silent and empty, there came across the street from his own dwelling-place the artist René, with a parcel beneath his arm.

He came up the stairs with a light, noiseless step, and pushed open the door of our attic. He paused on the threshold a moment, with the sort of reverent, hushed look on his face that I had seen on the faces of one or two swarthy, bearded, scarred soldiers as they paused before the picinas at the door of the little chapel which stood in my sight on the other side of our street.

Then he entered, placed that which he carried on a wooden chair fronting the light, uncovered it, and went quietly out again, without the women in the inner closet hearing him.

What he had brought was the canvas I had seen grow under his hand, the painting of me and the lamp and Lili. I do not doubt how he had done it; it was surely the little attic window, homely and true in likeness, and yet he had glorified us all, and so framed in my leaves and my white flowers, the low oil flame and

the fair head of my mistress, that there was that in the little picture which made me tremble and yet be glad. On a slender slip of paper attached to it there was written, "*Il n'y a pas de nuit sans étoile.*"

Of him I saw no more. The picture kept me silent company all that day.

At evening Lili came. It was late. She brought with her a sweet, cool perfume of dewy mosses and fresh leaves and strawberry plants—sweet as honey. She came in with a dark, dreamy brilliance in her eyes and long coils of foliage in her hands.

She brought to the canary chickweed and a leaf of lettuce. She kissed me and laid wet mosses on my parching roots, and fanned me with the breath of her fresh lips. She took to the old women within a huge cabbage leaf full of cherries, having, I doubt not, gone herself without in order to bring the ruddy fruit to them.

She had been happy, but she was very quiet. To those who love the country as she and I did, and, thus loving it, have to dwell in cities, there is as much of pain, perhaps, as of pleasure in a fleeting glimpse of the lost heaven.

She was tired, and sat for a while, and did not see the painting, for it was dusk. She only saw it when she rose and turned to light the lamp: then, with a little shrill cry, she fell on her knees before it in her wonder and her awe, and laughed and sobbed a little, and then was still again, looking at this likeness of herself.

The written words took her long to spell out, for she

could scarcely read, but when she had mastered them, her head sank on her breast with a flush and a smile, like the glow of the dawn over Provence, I thought.

She knew whence it came, no doubt, though there were many artists and students of art in that street.

But then there was only one who had watched her night after night as men watched the stars of old to read their fates in the heavens.

Lili was only a young *ouvrière*, she was only a girl of the people: she had quick emotions and innocent impulses; she had led her life straightly because it was her nature, as it is of the lilies—her namesakes, my cousins—to grow straight to the light, pure and spotless. But she was of the populace: she was frank, fearless, and strong, despite all her dreams. She was glad, and she sought not to hide it. With a gracious impulse of gratitude she turned to the lattice and leaned past me, and looked for my neighbor.

He was there in the gloom: he strove not to be seen, but a stray ray from a lamp at the vintner's gleamed on his handsome dark face, lean and pallid and yearning and sad, but full of force and of soul like a head of Rembrandt's. Lili stretched her hands to him with a noble, candid gesture and a sweet, tremulous laugh: "What you have given me!—it is you?—it is you?"

"Mademoiselle forgives?" he murmured, leaning as far out as the gable would permit. The street was still deserted, and very quiet. The theatres were all open to the people that night free, and bursts of music from many quarters rolled in through the sultry darkness.

Lili colored over all her fair pale face, even as I

have seen my sisters' white breasts glow to a wondrous wavering warmth as the sun of the west kissed them. She drew her breath with a quick sigh. She did not answer him in words, but with a sudden movement of exquisite eloquence she broke from me my fairest and my last-born blossom and threw it from her lattice into his.

Then, as he caught it, she closed the lattice with a swift, trembling hand, and left the chamber dark, and fled to the little sleeping-closet where her crucifix and her mother's rosary hung together above her bed.

As for me, I was left bereaved and bleeding. The dew which waters the growth of your human love is usually the tears or blood of some martyred life.

I loved Lili.

I prayed, as my torn stem quivered and my fairest begotten sank to her death in the night and the silence, that I might be the first and the last to suffer from the human love born that night.

I, a rose—Love's flower.

II.

Now, before that summer was gone, these two were betrothed to one another, and my little fair dead daughter, all faded and scentless though her half-opened leaves were, remained always on René's heart as a tender and treasured relic.

They were betrothed, I say—not wedded, for they were so terribly poor.

Many a day he, I think, had not so much as a crust to eat; and there passed many weeks when the works on his canvas stood unfinished because he had not wherewithal to buy the oils and the colors to finish them.

René was frightfully poor, indeed; but then, being an artist and a poet, and the lover of a fair and noble woman, and a dreamer of dreams, and a man God-gifted, he was no longer wretched. For the life of a painter is beautiful when he is still young, and loves truly, and has a genius in him stronger than all calamity, and hears a voice in which he believes say always in his ear, "Fear nothing. Men must believe as I do in thee, one day. And meanwhile we can wait!" And a painter in Paris, even though he starve on a few sous a day, can have so much that is lovely and full of picturesque charm in his daily pursuits: the long, wondrous galleries full of the arts he adores; the "*réalités*

de l'idéal' around him in that perfect world ; the slow, sweet, studious hours in the calm wherein all that is great in humanity alone survives ; the trance—half adoration, half aspiration, at once desire and despair—before the face of the Mona Lisa ; then, without, the streets so glad and so gay in the sweet, living sunshine ; the quiver of green leaves among gilded balconies ; the groups at every turn about the doors ; the glow of color in market-place and peopled square ; the quaint gray piles in old historic ways ; the stones, from every one of which some voice from the imperishable Past cries out ; the green, silent woods, the little leafy villages, the winding waters garden girt ; the forest heights, with the city gleaming and golden in the plain ;—all these are his. With these—and youth—who shall dare say he is not rich—ay, though his board be empty and his cup be dry ?

I had not loved Paris—I, a little imprisoned rose, caged in a clay pot, and seeing nothing but the skyline of the roofs. But I grew to love it, hearing from René and from Lili of all the poetry and gladness that Paris made possible in their young and burdened lives, and which could have been thus possible in no other city of the earth.

City of Pleasure you have called her, and with truth ; but why not also City of the Poor ? for that city, like herself, has remembered the poor in her pleasure, and given to them, no less than to the richest, the treasure of her laughing sunlight, of her melodious music, of her gracious hues, of her million flowers, of her shady leaves, of her divine ideals.

O world ! when you let Paris die you will let your last youth die with her ! Your rich will mourn a paradise deserted, but your poor will have need to weep with tears of blood for the ruin of the sole Eden whose sunlight sought them in their shadow, whose music found them in their loneliness, whose glad green ways were open to their tired feet, whose radiance smiled the sorrow from their aching eyes, and in whose wildest errors and whose vainest dreams their woes and needs were unforgotten.

Well, this little, humble love-idyl, which grew into being in an attic, had a tender grace of its own ; and I watched it with tenderness, and it seemed to me fresh as the dews of the morning in the midst of the hot, stifling world.

They could not marry : he had nothing but famine for his wedding-gift, and all the little that she made was taken for the food and wine of the bedridden old grandam in that religious execution of a filial duty which is so habitual in the French family-life that no one dreams counting it as a virtue.

But they spent their leisure time together : they passed their rare holiday hours in each other's society in the woods which they both loved or in the public galleries of art ; and when the autumn came on apace, and they could no longer sit at their open casements, he still watched the gleam of her pale lamp as a pilgrim the light of a shrine, and she, ere she went to her rest, would push ajar the closed shutter and put her pretty fair head into the darkling night, and waft him a gentle good-night, and then go and kneel down by

her bed and pray for him and his future before the cross which had been her dead mother's.

On that bright summer a hard winter followed. The poor suffered very much; and I in the closed lattice knew scarcely which was the worse—the icy, shivering chills of the snow-burdened air, or the close, noxious suffocation of the stove.

I was very sickly and ill, and cared little for my life during that bitter cold weather, when the panes of the lattice were all blocked from week's end to week's end with the solid silvery foliage of the frost.

René and Lili both suffered greatly: he could only keep warmth in his veins by the stoves of the public libraries, and she lost her work in the box trade after the New Year fairs, and had to eke out as best she might the few francs she had been able to lay back in the old brown pipkin in the closet. She had moreover to sell most of the little things in her garret: her own mattress went, though she kept the bed under her grandmother. But there were two things she would not sell, though for both was she offered money: they were her mother's reliques and myself.

She would not, I am sure, have sold the picture, either. But for that no one offered her a centime.

One day, as the last of the winter solstice was passing away, the old woman died.

Lili wept for her sincere and tender tears, though never in my time, nor in any other. I believe, had the poor old querulous, paralytic sufferer rewarded her with anything except lamentation and peevish discontent.

"*Now* you will come to me?" murmured her lover when they had returned from laying the old dead peasant in the quarter of the poor.

Lili drooped her head softly upon his breast.

"If you wish it!" she whispered, with a whisper as soft as the first low breath of summer.

If he wished it!

A gleam of pale gold sunshine shone through the dulled panes upon my feeble branches; a little timid fly crept out and spread its wings; the bells of the church rang an angelus; a child laughed in the street below; there came a smile of greenness spreading over the boughs of leafless trees; my lover the wind returned from the south, fresh from desert and ocean, with the scent of the spice groves and palm aisles of the East in his breath, and softly unclosing my lattice, murmured to me, "Didst thou think I was faithless? See, I come with the spring!"

So, though I was captive and they two were poor, yet we three were all happy; for love and a new year of promise were with us.

I bore a little snowy blossom (sister to the one which slept lifeless on René's heart) that spring, whilst yet the swallows were not back from the African gardens, and the first violets were carried in millions through the streets—the only innocent imperialists that the world has ever seen.

That little winter-begotten darling of mine was to be Lili's nuptial-flower. She took it so tenderly from me that it hardly seemed like its death.

"My little dear rose, who blossoms for me, though

I can only cage her in clay, and only let her see the sun's rays between the stacks of the chimneys!" she said softly over me as she kissed me; and when she said that, could I any more grieve for Provence?

"What do they wed upon, those two?" said the old vine to me.

And I answered him: "Hope and dreams."

"Will those bake bread and feed babes?" said the vine, as he shook his wrinkled tendrils despondently in the March air.

We did not ask in the attic.

Summer was nigh at hand, and we loved one another.

René had come to us—we had not gone to him. For our garret was on the sunny, his on the dark, side of the street, and Lili feared the gloom for me and the bird; and she could not bring herself to leave that old red-leaved creeper who had wound himself so close about the rain-pipe and the roof, and who could not have been dislodged without being slain.

With the Mardi Gras her trade had returned to her. René, unable to prosecute his grand works, took many of the little boxes in his own hands, and wrought on them with all the nameless mystical charm and the exquisite grace of touch which belong to the man who is by nature a great artist. The little trade could not at its best price bring much, but it brought bread; and we were happy.

While he worked at the box-lids she had leisure for her household labors: when these were done she would draw out her mother's old Breton distaff, and would sit

and spin. When twilight fell they would go forth together to dream under the dewy avenues and the glistening stars, or as often would wait within whilst he played on his mountain flute to the people at the doorways in the street below.

"Is it better to go out and see the stars and the leaves ourselves, or to stay in-doors and make all these forget the misfortune of not seeing them?" said Lili on one of those evenings when the warmth and the sunset almost allured her to draw the flute from her husband's hands and give him his hat instead; and then she looked down into the narrow road, at the opposite houses, at the sewing-girls stitching by their little windows, at the pale students studying their sickly lore with scalpel and with skeleton, at the hot, dusty little children at play on the asphalt sidewalk, at the sorrowful, darkened casements behind which she knew beds of sickness or of paralyzed old age were hidden—looked at all this from behind my blossoms, and then gave up the open air and the evening stroll that were so dear a pastime to her, and whispered to René, "Play, or they will be disappointed."

And he played, instead of going to the debating-club in the room round the corner.

"He has ceased to be a patriot," grumbled the old vine. "It is always so with every man when once he has loved a woman!"

Myself, I could not see that there was less patriotism in breathing the poetry of sound into the ears of his neighbors than in rousing the passions of hell in the breasts of his brethren.

But perhaps this was my ignorance: I believe that of late years people have grown to hold that the only pure patriotism is, and ought to be, evinced in the most intense and the most brutalized form of one passion—"Envy, eldest born of hell."

So these two did some good, and were happy, though more than once it chanced to them to have to go a whole day without tasting food of any sort.

I have said that René had genius—a genius bold, true, impassioned, masterful—such a genius as colors the smallest trifles that it touches. René could no more help putting an ideal grace into those little sweet-meat boxes—which sold at their very highest, in the booths of the fairs, at fifty centimes apiece—than we, the roses, can help being fragrant and fair.

Genius has a way of casting its pearls in the dust as we scatter our fragrance to every breeze that blows. Now and then the pearl is caught and treasured, as now and then some solitary creature pauses to smell the sweetness of the air in which we grow, and thanks the God who made us.

But as ninety-nine roses bloom unthanked for one that is thus remembered, so ninety-nine of the pearls of genius are trodden to pieces for one that is set on high and crowned with honor.

In the twilight of a dull day a little, feeble, brown old man climbed the staircase and entered our attic with shambling step.

We had no strangers to visit us: who visits the poor? We thought he was an enemy: the poor always do think so, being so little used to strangers.

René drew himself erect, and strove to hide the poverty of his garments, standing by his easel. Lili came to me and played with my leaves in her tender, caressing fashion.

"You painted this, M. René Claude?" asked the little brown old man. He held in his hand one of the bonbon boxes, the prettiest of them all, with a tambourine-girl dancing in a wreath of Provence roses. René had copied me with loving fidelity in the flowers, and with a sigh had murmured as he cast the box aside when finished, "That ought to fetch at least a franc!" But he had got no more than the usual two sous for it.

The little man sat down on the chair which Lili had placed for him.

"So they told me where I bought this. It was at a booth at St. Cloud. Do you know that it is charming?"

René smiled a little sadly: Lili flushed with joy. It was the first praise which she had ever heard given to him.

"You have a great talent," pursued the little man.

René bowed his handsome haggard face—his mouth quivered a very little: for the first time Hope entered into him.

"Genius, indeed," said the stranger; and he sauntered a little about and looked at the canvases, and wondered and praised, and said not very much, but said that little so well and so judiciously that it was easy to see he was no mean judge of art, and possibly no slender patron of it.

As Lili stood by me I saw her color come and go and her breast heave. I too trembled in all my leaves:

were recognition and the world's homage coming to René at last?

"And I have been so afraid always that I had injured, burdened him, clogged his strength in that endless strife!" she murmured below her breath. "O dear little rose! if only the world can but know his greatness!"

Meanwhile the old man looked through the sketches and studies with which the room was strewn. "You do not finish your things?" he said abruptly.

René flushed darkly. "Oil pictures cost money," he said, briefly, "and—I am very poor."

Though a peasant's son, he was very proud: the utterance must have cost him much.

The stranger took snuff. "You are a man of singular genius," he said simply. "You only want to be known to get the prices of Meissonier."

Meissonier!—the Rothschild of the studios, the artist whose six-inch canvas would bring the gold value of a Raphael or a Titian!

Lili, breathing fast and white as death with ecstasy, made the sign of the cross on her breast: the delicate brown hand of René shook where it leaned on his easel.

They were both silent—silent from the intensity of their hope.

"Do you know who I am?" the old man pursued with a cordial smile.

"I have not that honor," murmured René.

The stranger, taking his snuff out of a gold box, named a name at which the painter started. It was

that of one of the greatest art-dealers in the whole of Europe; one who at a word could make or mar an artist's reputation; one whose accuracy of judgment was considered infallible by all connoisseurs, and the passport to whose galleries was to any unknown painting a certain passport also to the fame of men.

"You are a man of singular genius," repeated the great purchaser, taking his snuff in the middle of the little bare chamber. "It is curious—one always finds genius either in a cellar or in an attic: it never, by any chance, is to be discovered midway on the stairs—never in the *mezzo terzo*! But to the point. You have great delicacy of touch, striking originality, a wonderful purity yet bloom in your color, and an exquisite finish of minutiae, without any weakness—a combination rare, very rare. That girl yonder, feeding white pigeons on the leads of a roof, with an atom of blue sky, and a few vine leaves straying over the parapet—that is perfectly conceived. Finished it must be. So must that little study of the beggar-boy looking through the gilded gates into the rose-gardens—it is charming, charming. Your price for those?"

René's colorless, worn young face colored to the brows. "Monsieur is too good," he muttered brokenly. "A nameless artist has no price, except——"

"Honor," murmured Lili as she moved forward with throbbing heart and dim eyes. "Ah, monsieur, give him a name in Paris! We want nothing else—nothing else!"

"Poor fools!" said the dealer to his snuff-box. I heard him—they did not.

"Madame," he answered aloud, "Paris herself will give him that the first day his first canvas hangs in my galleries. Meanwhile, I must in honesty be permitted to add something more. For each of those little canvases, the girl on the roof and the boy at the gate, I will give you now two thousand francs, and two thousand more when they shall be completed. Provided——"

He paused and glanced musingly at René.

Lili had turned away, and was sobbing for very joy at this undreamed-of deliverance.

René stood quite still, with his hands crossed on the easel and his head bent on his chest. The room, I think, swam round him.

The old man sauntered again a little about the place, looking here and looking there, murmuring certain artistic disquisitions technical and scientific, leaving them time to recover from the intensity of their emotion.

What a noble thing old age was, I thought, living only to give hope to the young in their sorrow, and to release captive talents from the prison of obscurity! We should leave the little room in the roof, and dwell in some bright quarter where it was all leaves and flowers; and René would be great, and go to dine with princes and drive a team of belled horses, like a famous painter who had dashed once with his splendid equipage through our narrow passage; and we should see the sky always—as much of it as ever we chose; and Lili would have a garden of her own, all grass and foliage and falling waters, in which I should live in the open air all the day long, and make believe that I was in Provence.

My dreams and my fancies were broken by the sound of the old man's voice taking up the thread of his discourse once more in front of René.

"I will give you four thousand francs each for those two little canvases," he repeated. "It is a mere pinch of dust to what you will make in six months' time if—if—you hear me?—your name is brought before the public of Paris in my galleries and under my auspices. I suppose you have heard something of what I can do, eh? Well, all I can do I will do for you; for you have a great talent, and without introduction, my friend, you may as well roll up your pictures and burn them in your stove to save charcoal. You know that?"

René indeed knew—none better. Lili turned on the old man her sweet, frank Breton eyes, smiling their radiant gratitude through tenderest tears.

"The saints will reward you, monsieur, in a better world than this," she murmured softly.

The old man took snuff a little nervously. "There is one condition I must make," he said with a trifling hesitation—"one only."

"Ask of my gratitude what you will," answered René quickly, while he drew a deep breath of relief and freedom—the breath of one who casts to the ground the weight of a deadly burden.

"It is, that you will bind yourself only to paint for me."

"Certainly!" René gave the assent with eagerness. Poor fellow! it was a novelty so exquisite to have any one save the rats to paint for. It never dawned upon his thoughts that when he stretched his hands out with

such passionate desire to touch the hem of the garment of Fortune and catch the gleam of the laurels of Fame, he might be in truth only holding them out to fresh fetters.

"Very well," said the old man quietly, and he sat down again and looked full in René's face, and unfolded his views for the artist's future.

He used many words, and was slow and suave in their utterance, and paused often and long to take out his heavy gold box ; but he spoke well. Little by little his meaning gleamed out from the folds of verbiage in which he skilfully enwrapped it.

It was this.

The little valueless drawings on the people's sweetmeat boxes of gilded card-board had a grace, a color and a beauty in them which had caught, at a fair-booth in the village of St. Cloud, the ever-watchful eyes of the great dealer. He had bought half a dozen of the boxes for a couple of francs. He had said, "Here is what I want." Wanted for what? Briefly, to produce Petitot enamels and Fragonard cabinets—genuine eighteenth-century work. There was a rage for it. René would understand?

René's dark, southern eyes lost a little of their new lustre of happiness, and grew troubled with a sort of cloud of perplexity. He did not seem to understand.

The old man took more snuff, and used phrases clearer still.

There were great collectors—dilettanti of houses imperial and royal and princely and noble, of all the grades of greatness—who would give any sum for bonbonnières and tabatières of eighteenth-century work by

any one of the few famous masters of that time. A genuine, incontestable sweetmeat box from the ateliers of the Louis XIV. or Louis XV. period would fetch almost a fabulous sum. Then again he paused, doubtfully.

René bowed, and his wondering glance said without words, "I know this. But I have no eighteenth-century work to sell you: if I had, should we starve in an attic?"

His patron coughed a little, looked at Lili, then proceeded to explain yet farther.

In René's talent he had discerned the hues, the grace, the delicacy yet brilliancy, the voluptuousness and the *désinvolture* of the best eighteenth-century work. René doubtless did other and higher things which pleased himself far more than these airy trifles. Well, let him pursue the greater line of art if he chose; but he, the old man who spoke, could assure him that nothing would be so lucrative to him as those bacchantes in wreaths of roses and young tambourine-players *gorge au vent* dancing in a bed of violets, and beautiful marquises, powdered and jewelled, looking over their fans, which he had painted for those poor little two-sous boxes of the populace, and the like of which, exquisitely finished on enamel or ivory, set in gold and tortoise-shell rimmed with pearls and turquoises or opa's and diamonds, would deceive the finest connoisseur in Europe into receiving them as—whatever they might be signed and dated.

If René would do one or two of these at dictation in a year, not more—more would be perilous—paint

and sign them and produce them with any touches that might be commanded ; never ask what became of them when finished, nor recognize them if hereafter he might see them in any illustrious collection,—if René would bind himself to do this, he, the old man who spoke, would buy his other paintings, place them well in his famous galleries, and, using all his influence, would make him in a twelvemonth's time the most celebrated of all the young painters of Paris.

It was a bargain ! Ah, how well it was, he said, to put the best of one's powers into the most trifling things one did ! If that poor little two-sous box had been less lavishly and gracefully decorated, it would never have arrested his eyes in the bonbon-booth at St. Cloud. The old man paused to take snuff and receive an answer.

René stood motionless.

Lili had sunk into a seat, and was gazing at the tempter with wide-open, puzzled, startled eyes. Both were silent. "It is a bargain?" said the old man again. "Understand me, M. René Claude. You have no risk, absolutely none, and you have the certainty of fair fame and fine fortune in the space of a few years. You will be a great man before you have a gray hair : that comes to very few. I shall not trouble you for more than two dix-huitième siècle enamels in the year—perhaps for only one. You can spend ten months out of the twelve on your own canvases, making your own name and your own wealth as swiftly as your ambition and impatience can desire. Madame here," said the acute dealer with a pleasant smile—

"Madame here can have a garden sloping on the Seine and a glass house of choicest flowers—which I see are her graceful weakness ere another rose-season has time to come round, if you choose."

His voice lingered softly on the three last words.

The dew stood on René's forehead, his hands clinched on the easel :

"You wish me—to—paint—forgeries of the Petitot enamels?"

The old man smiled unmoved : "Chut, chut ! Will you paint me little bonbonnières on enamel instead of on card-board ? That is all the question. I have said where they go, how they are set : what they are called shall be my affair. You know nothing. The only works of yours which you will be concerned to acknowledge will be your own canvas pictures. What harm can it do any creature ? You will gratify a connoisseur or two innocently, and you will meanwhile be at leisure to follow the bent of your own genius, which otherwise——"

He paused : I heard the loud throbs of René's heart under that cruel temptation.

Lili gazed at his tempter with the same startled terror and bewilderment still dilating her candid eyes with a woful pain.

"Otherwise," pursued the old man with merciless tranquillity, "you will never see me any more, my friends. If you try to repeat any story to my hindrance, no one will credit you. I am rich, you are poor. You have a great talent : I shall regret to see it lost, but I shall let it die—so."

And he trod very gently on a little gnat that crawled near his foot, and killed it.

A terrible agony gathered in the artist's face.

"O God!" he cried in his torture, and his eyes went to the canvases against the wall, and then to the face of his wife, with an unutterable yearning desire.

For them, for *them*, this sin which tempted him looked virtue.

"Do you hesitate?" said the merciless old man. "Pshaw! whom do you hurt? You give me work as good as that which you imitate, and I call it only by a dead man's name: who is injured? What harm can there be in humoring the fanaticism of fashion? Choose—I am in haste."

René hid his face with his hands, so that he should not behold those dear creations of his genius which so cruelly, so innocently, assailed him with a temptation beyond his strength.

"Choose for me—you!" he muttered in his agony to Lili.

Lili, white as death, drew closer to him.

"My René, your heart has chosen," she murmured through her dry, quivering lips. "You cannot buy honor by fraud."

René lifted his head and looked straight in the eyes of the man who held the scales of his fate, and could weigh out for his whole life's portion either fame and fortune or obscurity and famine.

"Sir," he said slowly, with a bitter tranquil smile about his mouth, "my garret is empty, but it is clean. May I trouble you to leave it as you found it?"

So they were strong to the end, these two famished children of frivolous Paris.

But when the door had closed and shut their tempter out, the revulsion came: they wept those tears of blood which come from the hearts' depths of those who have seen Hope mock them with a smile a moment, to leave them face to face with Death.

"Poor fools!" sighed the old vine from his corner in the gray, dull twilight of the late autumn day.

Was the vine right?

The air which he had breathed for fifty years through all his dust-choked leaves and tendrils had been the air off millions of human lungs, corrupted in its passage through millions of human lips, and the thoughts which he thought were those of human wisdom.

The sad day died; the night fell; the lattice was closed; the flute lay untouched. A great misery seemed to enfold us. True, we were no worse off than we had been when the same day dawned. But that is the especial cruelty of every tempter always: he touches the innocent closed eyes of his victims with a collyrium which makes the happy blindness of content no longer possible. If strong to resist him, he has still his vengeance, for they are never again at peace as they were before that fatal hour in which he showed them all that they were not, all that they might be.

Our stove was not more chill, our garret not more empty; our darkness not more dark amidst the gay, glad, dazzling city; our dusky roof and looming crown that shut the sky out from us not more gloomy

and impenetrable than they had been on all those other earlier nights when yet we had been happy. Yet how intensified million-fold seemed cold and loneliness and poverty and darkness, all!—for we had for the first time known what it was to think of riches, of fame, of homage, of light, as *possible*, and then to lose them all forever!

I had been resigned for love's sake to dwell among the roofs, seeing not the faces of the stars, nor feeling ever the full glory of the sun; but now—— I had dreamed of the fair freedom of garden-ways and the endless light of summer suns on palace terraces, and I drooped and shivered and sickened, and was twice captive and twice exiled; and knew that I was a little nameless, worthless, hapless thing, whose fairest chaplet of blossom no hand would ever gather for a crown.

As with my life, so was it likewise with theirs.

They had been so poor, but they had been so happy: the poverty remained, the joy had flown.

That winter was again very hard, very cold: they suffered greatly.

They could scarcely keep together body and soul, as your strange phrase runs: they went without food sometimes for days and days, and fuel they had scarcely ever.

The bird in his cage was sold: they would not keep the little golden singing thing to starve to silence like themselves.

As for me, I nearly perished of the cold: only the love I bore to Lili kept a little life in my leafless branches.

All that cruel winter-time they were strong still, those children of Paris.

For they sought no alms, and in their uttermost extremity neither of them ever whispered to the other, "Go seek the tempter: repent, be wise. Give not up our lives for a mere phantasy of honor."

"When the snow is on the ground, and the canvases have to burn in the stove, then you will change your minds and come to me on your knees," the old wicked, foul spirit had said mocking them, as he had opened the door of the attic and passed away creaking down the dark stairs.

And I suppose he had reckoned on this; but if he had done so he had reckoned without his host, as your phrase runs: neither René nor Lili ever went to him, either on knees or in any other wise.

When the spring came we three were still all living—at least their hearts still beat and their lips still drew breath, as my boughs were still green and my roots still clung to the soil. But no more to them or to me did the coming of spring bring, as of old, the real living of life, which is joy. And my lover the wind wooed me no more, and the birds no more brought me the rose-whispers of my kindred in Provence. For even the little pigeon-hole in the roof had become too costly a home for us, and we dwelt in a den under the stones of the streets, where no light came and scarce a breath of air ever strayed to us.

There the uncompleted canvases on which the painter whom Lili loved had tried to write his title to the im-

mortality of fame, were at last finished—finished, for the rats ate them.

All this while we lived—the man whose genius and misery were hell on earth; the woman whose very purity and perfectness of love were her direst torture; and I, the little white flower born of the sun and the dew, of fragrance and freedom, to whom every moment of this blindness, this suffocation, this starvation, this stench of putrid odors, this horrible roar of the street above, was a moment worse than any pang of death.

Away there in Provence so many a fair rose-sister of mine bowed her glad, proud, innocent head with anguish and shuddering terrors to the sharp summons of the severing knife that cut in twain her life, whilst I—I, on and on—was forced to keep so much of life as lies in the capacity to suffer and to love in vain.

So much was left to them: no more.

“Let us compel Death to remember us, since even Death forgets us!” René murmured once in his despair to her.

But Lili had pressed her famished lips to his: “Nay, dear, wait: God will remember us even yet, I think.”

It was her faith. And of her faith she was justified at last.

There came a ghastlier season yet, a time of horror insupportable—of ceaseless sound beside which the roar of the mere traffic of the streets would have seemed silence—a stench beside which the sulphur smoke and the gas fumes of a previous time would have been as some sweet fresh woodland air—a famine beside which the daily hunger of the poor was re-

membered as the abundance of a feast—a cold beside which the chillness of the scant fuel and empty braziers of other winters were recalled as the warmth of summer—a darkness only lit by the red flame of burning houses—a solitude only broken by the companionship of woe and sickness and despair—a suffocation only changed by a rush of air strong with the scent of blood, of putridity, of the million living plague-stricken, of the million dead lying unburied.

For there was War.

Of year or day or hour I knew nothing. It was always the same blackness as of night; the same horror of sound, of scent, of cold; the same misery; the same torture. I suppose that the sun was quenched, that the birds were dumb, that the winds were stilled forever—that all the world was dead: I do not know. They called it War. I suppose that they meant—Hell!

Yet Lili lived, and I: in that dead darkness we had lost René—we saw his face no more. Yet he could not be in his grave, I knew, for Lili, clasping my barren branches to her breast, would murmur, “Whilst he still lives I will live—yes, yes, yes!”

And she did live—so long, so long!—on a few draughts of water and a few husks of grain.

I knew that it was long, for full a hundred times she muttered aloud, “Another day? O God!—how long? how long?”

At last in the darkness a human hand was stretched to her, once, close beside me. A foul, fierce light, the light of flame, was somewhere on the air above us, and at that moment glowed through the horrid gloom

we dwelt in in the bowels of the earth. I saw the hand and what it held to her : it was a stranger's, and it held the little colorless dead rose, my sweetest blossom, that had lain ever upon René's heart.

She took it—she who had given it as her first love-gift. She was mute. In the glare of the flame that quivered through the darkness I saw her—standing quite erect and very still.

The voice of a stranger thrilled through the din from the world above. "He fought as only patriots can," it said softly and as through tears. "I was beside him. He fell with Regnault in the sortie yesterday. He could not speak : he had only strength to give me this for you. Be comforted : he has died for Paris."

On Lili's face there came once more the radiance of a perfect peace, a glory pure and endless as the glory of the sun. "Great in death !" she murmured. "My love, my love, I come !"

I lost her in the darkness.

I heard a voice above me say that life had left her lips as the dead rose touched them.

What more is there for me to tell ?

I live, since to breathe, and to feel pain, and to desire vainly, and to suffer always, are surest proofs of life.

I live, since that stranger's hand which brought my little dead blossom as the message of farewell, had pity on me and brought me away from that living grave. But the pity was vain : I died the only death that had any power to hurt me when the human heart I loved grew still forever.

The light of the full day now shines on me ; the shadows are cool, the dews are welcome : they speak around me of the coming of spring, and in the silence of the dawns I hear from the woods without the piping of the nesting birds ; but for me the summer can never more return—for me the sun can never again be shining—for me the greenest garden world is barren as a desert.

For I am only a little rose, but I am in exile and France is desolate.

LAMPBLACK

LAMPBLACK.

A POOR black paint lay very unhappy in its tube one day alone, having tumbled out of an artist's color-box and lying quite unnoticed for a year. "I am only Lampblack," he said to himself. "The master never looks at me: he says I am heavy, dull, lustreless, useless. I wish I could cake and dry up and die, as poor Flakewhite did when he thought she turned yellow and deserted her."

But Lampblack could not die; he could only lie in his tin tube and pine, like a silly, sorrowful thing as he was, in company with some broken bits of charcoal and a rusty palette-knife. The master never touched him; month after month passed by, and he was never thought of; the other paints had all their turn of fair fortune, and went out into the world to great academies and mighty palaces, transfigured and rejoicing in a thousand beautiful shapes and services. But Lampblack was always passed over as dull and coarse, which indeed he was, and knew himself to be so, poor fellow, which made it all the worse. "You are only a deposit!" said the other colors to him; and he felt that it was disgraceful to be a deposit, though he was not quite sure what it meant.

"If only I were happy like the others!" thought

poor, sooty Lampblack, sorrowful in his corner. "There is Bistre, now, he is not so very much better-looking than I am, and yet they can do nothing without him, whether it is a girl's face or a wimple in a river!"

The others were all so happy in this beautiful, bright studio, whose open casements were hung with myrtle and passion-flower, and whose silence was filled with the singing of nightingales. Cobalt, with a touch or two, became the loveliness of summer skies at morning; the Lakes and Carmines bloomed in a thousand exquisite flowers and fancies; the Chromes and Ochres (mere dull earths) were allowed to spread themselves in sheets of gold that took the shine of the sun into the darkest places; Umber, a sombre and gloomy thing, could lurk yet in a child's curls and laugh in a child's smiles; whilst all the families of the Vermilions, the Blues, the Greens, lived in a perpetual glory of sunset or sunrise, of ocean waves or autumn woods, of kingly pageant or of martial pomp.

It was very hard. Poor Lampblack felt as if his very heart would break, above all when he thought of pretty little Rose Madder, whom he loved dearly, and who never would even look at him, because she was so very proud, being herself always placed in nothing less than rosy clouds, or the hearts of roses, or something as fair and spiritual.

"I am only a wretched deposit!" sighed Lampblack, and the rusty palette-knife grumbled back, "My own life has been ruined in cleaning dirty brushes, and see what the gratitude of men and brushes is!"

"But at least you have been of use once; but]

never am,—never!” said Lampblack, wearily; and indeed he had been there so long that the spiders had spun their silver fleeces all about him, and he was growing as gray as an old bottle does in a dark cellar.

At that moment the door of the studio opened, and there came a flood of light, and the step of a man was heard: the hearts of all the colors jumped for joy, because the step was that of their magician, who out of mere common clays and ground ores could raise them at a touch into splendors of the gods and divinities immortal.

Only the heart of poor dusty Lampblack could not beat a throb the more, because he was always left alone and never was thought worthy even of a glance. He could not believe his senses when this afternoon—oh, miracle and ecstasy!—the step of the master crossed the floor to the obscured corner where he lay under his spiders’ webs, and the hand of the master touched him. Lampblack felt sick and faint with rapture. Had recognition come at last?

The master took him up: “You will do for this work,” he said; and Lampblack was borne trembling to an easel. The colors, for once in their turn neglected, crowded together to watch, looking in their bright tin tubes like rows of little soldiers in armor.

“It is the old dull Deposit,” they murmured to one another, and felt contemptuous, yet were curious, as scornful people often will be.

“But I am going to be glorious and great,” thought Lampblack, and his heart swelled high; for never more would they be able to hurl the name of Deposit at him,

a name which hurt him none the less, but all the more indeed, because it was unintelligible.

"You will do for this work," said the master, and let Lampblack out of his metal prison-house into the light and touched him with the brush that was the wand of magic.

"What am I going to be?" wondered Lampblack, as he felt himself taken on to a large piece of deal board, so large that he felt he must be going to make the outline of an athlete or the shadows of a tempest at the least.

Himself he could not tell what he was becoming: he was happy enough and grand enough only to be employed, and, as he was being used, began to dream a thousand things of all the scenes he would be in, and all the hues that he would wear, and all the praise that he would hear when he went out into that wonderful great world of which his master was an idol. From his secret dreams he was harshly roused; all the colors were laughing and tittering round him till the little tin helmets they wore shook with their merriment.

"Old Deposit is going to be a sign-post," they cried to one another so merrily that the spiders, who are not companionable creatures, felt themselves compelled to come to the doors of their dens and chuckle too. A sign-post! Lampblack, stretched out in an ecstasy upon the board, roused himself shivering from his dreams, and gazed at his own metamorphosis. He had been made into seven letters, thus:

B A N D I T A.

This word in the Italian country, where the English

painter's studio was, means, Do not trespass, do not shoot, do not show yourself here: anything, indeed, that is peremptory and uncivil to all trespassers. In these seven letters, outspread upon the board, was Lampblack crucified!

Farewell, ambitious hopes and happy dreams! He had been employed to paint a sign-board, a thing stoned by the boys, blown on by the winds, gnawed by the rats, and drenched with the winter's rains. Better the dust and the cobwebs of his old corner than such shame as this!

But help was there none. His fate was fixed. He was dried with a drench of turpentine, hastily clothed in a coat of copal, and, ere he yet was fully aware of all his misery, was being borne away upon the great board out of doors and handed to the gardener. For the master was a hasty and ardent man, and had been stung into impatience by the slaughter of some favorite blue thrushes in his ilex-trees that day, and so in his haste had chosen to do journeyman's work himself. Lampblack was carried out of the studio for the last time, and as the door closed on him he heard all the colors laughing, and the laugh of little Rose Madder was highest of all as she cried to Naples Yellow, who was a dandy and made court to her, "Poor old ugly Deposit! He will grumble to the owls and the bats now!"

The door shut, shutting him out forever from all that joyous company and palace of fair visions, and the rough hands of the gardener grasped him and carried him to the edge of the great garden, where the wall overlooked the public road, and there fastened

aim up on high with a band of iron round the trunk of a tree.

That night it rained heavily, and the north wind blew, and there was thunder also. Lampblack, out in the storm without his tin house to shelter him, felt that of all creatures wretched on the face of the earth there was not one so miserable as he.

A sign-board ! Nothing but a sign-board !

The degradation of a color, created for art and artists, could not be deeper or more grievous anywhere. Oh, how he sighed for his tin tube and the quiet nook with the charcoal and the palette-knife !

He had been unhappy there indeed, but still had had always some sort of hope to solace him,—some chance still remaining that one day fortune might smile and he be allowed to be at least the lowest stratum of some immortal work.

But now hope was there none. His doom, his end, were fixed and changeless. Nevermore could he be anything but what he was ; and change there could be none till weather and time should have done their work on him, and he be rotting on the wet earth, a shattered and worm-eaten wreck.

Day broke,—a gloomy, misty morning.

From where he was crucified upon the tree-trunk he could no longer even see his beloved home the studio : he could only see a dusky, intricate tangle of branches all about him, and below the wall of flint, with the Banksia that grew on it, and the hard muddy highway, drenched from the storm of the night.

A man passed in a miller's cart, and stood up and swore at him, because the people had liked to come

and shoot and trap the birds of the master's wooded gardens, and knew that they must not do it now.

A slug crawled over him, and a snail also. A wood-pecker hammered at him with its strong beak. A boy went by under the wall and threw stones at him, and called him names. The rain poured down again heavily. He thought of the happy painting-room, where it had seemed always summer and always sunshine, and where now in the forenoon all the colors were marshalling in the pageantry of the Arts, as he had seen them do hundreds of times from his lone corner. All the misery of the past looked happiness now.

"If I were only dead, like Flakewhite," he thought; but the stones only bruised, they did not kill him: and the iron band only hurt, it did not stifle him. For whatever suffers very much, has always so much strength to continue to exist. And almost his loyal heart blasphemed and cursed the master who had brought him to such a fate as this.

The day grew apace, and noon went by, and with it the rain passed. The sun shone out once more, and Lampblack, even imprisoned and wretched as he was, could not but see how beautiful the wet leaves looked, and the gossamers all hung with rain-drops, and the blue sky that shone through the boughs; for he had not lived with a great artist all his days to be blind, even in pain, to the loveliness of nature. The sun came out, and with it some little brown birds tripped out too,—very simple and plain in their costumes and ways, but which Lampblack knew were the loves of the poets, for he had heard the master call them so

many times in summer nights. The little brown birds came tripping and pecking about on the grass underneath his tree-trunk, and then flew on the top of the wall, which was covered with Banksia and many other creepers. The brown birds sang a little song, for though they sing most in the moonlight they do sing by day too, and sometimes all day long. And what they sung was this :

“ Oh, how happy we are, how happy ! No nets dare now be spread for us, no cruel boys dare climb, and no cruel shooters fire. We are safe, quite safe, and the sweet summer has begun ! ”

Lampblack listened, and even in his misery was touched and soothed by the tender liquid sounds that these little throats poured out among the light-yellow bloom of the Banksia flowers. And when one of the brown birds came and sat on a branch by him, swaying itself and drinking the rain-drops off a leaf, he ventured to ask, as well as he could for the iron that strangled him, why they were so safe, and what made them so happy.

The bird looked at him in surprise.

“ Do you not know ? ” he said. “ It is *you* ! ”

“ I ! ” echoed Lampblack, and could say no more, for he feared that the bird was mocking him, a poor, silly, rusty black paint, only spread out to rot in fair weather and foul. What good could he do to any creature ?

“ You, ” repeated the nightingale. “ Did you not see that man under the wall ? He had a gun ; we should have been dead but for you. We will come and sing to you all night long, since you like it ; and

when we go to bed at dawn, I will tell my cousins the thrushes and merles to take our places, so that you shall hear somebody singing near you all the day long."

Lampblack was silent.

His heart was too full to speak.

Was it possible that he was of use, after all?

"Can it be true?" he said, timidly.

"Quite true," said the nightingale.

"Then the master knew best," thought Lampblack.

Never would he adorn a palace or be adored upon an altar. His high hopes were all dead, like last year's leaves. The colors in the studio had all the glories of the world, but he was of use in it, after all; he could save these little lives. He was poor and despised, bruised by stones and drenched by storms; yet was he content, nailed there upon his tree, for he had not been made quite in vain.

The sunset poured its red and golden splendors through the darkness of the boughs, and the birds sang all together, shouting for joy and praising God.

THE AMBITIOUS ROSE-TREE

THE AMBITIOUS ROSE-TREE.

SHE was a Quatre Saison Rose-tree.

She lived in a beautiful old garden with some charming magnolias for neighbors: they rather overshadowed her, certainly, because they were so very great and grand; but then such shadow as that is preferable, as every one knows, to a mere vulgar enjoyment of common daylight, and then the beetles went most to the magnolia-blossoms, for being so great and grand of course they got very much preyed upon, and this was a vast gain for the rose that was near them. She herself leaned against the wall of an orange-house, in company with a *Banksia*, a buoyant, active, simple-minded thing, for whom *Rosa Damascena*, who thought herself much better born than these climbers, had a natural contempt. *Banksiæ* will flourish and be content anywhere, they are such easily-pleased creatures; and when you cut them they thrive on it, which shows a very plebeian and pachydermatous temper; and they laugh all over in the face of an April day, shaking their little golden clusters of blossom in such a merry way that the Rose-tree, who was herself very reserved and thorny, had really scruples about speaking to them.

For she was by nature extremely proud,—much prouder than her lineage warranted,—and a hard fate

had fixed her to the wall of an orangery, where hardly anybody ever came, except the gardener and his men to carry the oranges in in winter and out in spring, or water and tend them while they were housed there.

She was a handsome rose, and she knew it. But the garden was so crowded—like the world—that she could not get herself noticed in it. In vain was she radiant and red close on to Christmas-time as in the fullest heats of midsummer. Nobody thought about her or praised her. She pined and was very unhappy.

The Banksiæ, who are little, frank, honest-hearted creatures, and say out what they think, as such plebeian people will, used to tell her roundly she was thankless for the supreme excellence of her lot.

“You have everything the soul of a rose can wish for: a splendid old wall with no nasty chinks in it; a careful gardener, who nips all the larvæ in the bud before they can do you any damage; sun, water, care; above all, nobody ever cuts a single blossom off you! What more can you wish for? This orangery is paradise!”

She did not answer.

What wounded her pride so deeply was just this fact, that they never *did* cut off any of her blossoms. When day after day, year after year, she crowned herself with her rich crimson glory and no one ever came nigh to behold or to gather it, she could have died with vexation and humiliation.

Would nobody see she was worth anything?

The truth was that in this garden there was such an abundance of very rare roses that a common though beautiful one like *Rosa Damascena* remained unthought

of; she was lovely, but then there were so many lovelier still, or, at least, much more *à la mode*.

In the secluded garden-corner she suffered all the agonies of a pretty woman in the great world, who is only a pretty woman, and no more. It needs so *very* much more to be "somebody." To be somebody was what Rosa Damascena sighed for, from rosy dawn to rosier sunset.

From her wall she could see across the green lawns, the great parterre which spread before the house terrace, and all the great roses that bloomed there,—Her Majesty Gloire de Dijon, who was a reigning sovereign born, the royally-born Niphétos, the Princesse Adelaïde, the Comtesse Ouvaroff, the Vicomtesse de Cazes all in gold, Madame de Sombreuil in snowy white, the beautiful Louise de Savoie, the exquisite Duchess of Devoniensis,—all the roses that were great ladies in their own right, and as far off her as were the stars that hung in heaven. Rosa Damascena would have given all her brilliant carnation hues to be pale and yellow like the Princesse Adelaïde, or delicately colorless like Her Grace of Devoniensis.

She tried all she could to lose her own warm blushes, and prayed that bees might sting her and so change her hues; but the bees were of low taste, and kept their pearl-powder and rouge and other pigments for the use of common flowers, like the evening primrose or the buttercup and borage, and never came near to do her any good in arts of toilet.

One day the gardener approached and stood and looked at her: then all at once she felt a sharp stab

in her from his knife, and a vivid pain ran downward through her stem.

She did not know it, but gardeners and gods "this way grant prayer."

"Has not something happened to me?" she asked of the little Banksiæ; for she felt very odd all over her; and when you are unwell you cannot be very haughty.

The saucy Banksiæ laughed, running over their wires that they cling to like little children.

"You have got your wish," they said. "You are going to be a great lady; they have made you into a *Rosa Indica*!"

A tea-rose! Was it possible?

Was she going to belong at last to that grand and graceful order, which she had envied so long and vainly from afar?

Was she, indeed, no more mere simple *Rosa Damascena*? She felt so happy she could hardly breathe. She thought it was her happiness that stifled her; in real matter of fact it was the tight bands in which the gardener had bound her.

"Oh, what joy!" she thought, though she still felt very uncomfortable, but not for the world would she ever have admitted it to the Banksiæ.

The gardener had tied a tin tube on to her, and it was heavy and cumbersome; but no doubt, she said, to herself, the thing was fashionable, so she bore the burden of it very cheerfully.

The Banksiæ asked her how she felt; but she would not deign even to reply; and when a friendly black-bird, who had often picked grubs off her leaves, came

and sang to her, she kept silent: a *Rosa Indica* was far above a blackbird.

"Next time you want a caterpillar taken away, he may eat you for *me*!" said the blackbird, and flew off in a huff.

She was very ungrateful to hate the blackbird so, for he had been most useful to her in doing to death all the larvæ of worms and beetles and caterpillars and other destroyers which were laid treacherously within her leaves. The good blackbird, with many another feathered friend, was forever at work in some good deed of the kind, and all the good, grateful flowers loved him and his race. But to this terribly proud and discontented *Rosa Damascena* he had been a bore, a common creature, a nuisance, a monster,—any one of these things by turns, and sometimes all of them altogether. She used to long for the cat to get him.

"You ought to be such a happy rose!" the merle had said to her, one day. "There is no rose so strong and healthy as you are, except the briers."

And from that day she had hated him. The idea of naming those hedgerow brier roses in the same breath with her!

You would have seen in that moment of her rage a very funny sight had you been there; nothing less funny than a rose-tree trying to box a blackbird's ears!

But, to be sure, you would only have thought the wind was blowing about the rose, so you would have seen nothing really of the drollery of it all, which was not droll at all to *Rosa Damascena*, for a wound in one's vanity is as long healing as a wound from a conical bullet in one's body. The blackbird had not

gone near her after that, nor any of his relations and friends, and she had had a great many shooting and flying pains for months together, in consequence of aphides' eggs having been laid inside her stem,—eggs of which the birds would have eased her long before if they had not been driven away by her haughty rage.

However, she had been almost glad to have some ailment. She had called it aneurism, and believed it made her look refined and interesting. If it would only have made her pale! But it had not done that: she had remained of the richest rose color.

When the winter had passed and the summer had come round again, the grafting had done its work: she was really a *Rosa Indica*, and timidly put forth the first blossom in her new estate. It was a small, rather puny yellowish thing, not to be compared to her own natural red clusters, but she thought it far finer.

Scarcely had it been put forth by her than the gardener whipped it off with his knife, and bore it away in proof of his success in such transmogrifications.

She had never felt the knife before, when she had been only *Rosa Damascena*: it hurt her very much, and her heart bled.

“Il faut souffrir pour être belle,” said the *Banksia* in a good-natured effort at consolation. She was not going to answer them, and she made believe that her tears were only dew, though it was high noon and all the dew-drops had been drunk by the sun, who by noon-time gets tired of climbing and grows thirsty.

Her next essay was much finer, and the knife whipped that off also. That summer she bore more and more blossoms, and always the knife cut them

away, for she had been made one of the great race of *Rosa Indica*.

Now, a rose-tree, when a blossom is chopped or broken off, suffers precisely as we human mortals do if we lose a finger; but the rose-tree, being a much more perfect and delicate handiwork of nature than any human being, has a faculty we have not: it lives and has a sentient soul in every one of its roses, and whatever one of these endures the tree entire endures also by sympathy. You think this very wonderful? Not at all. It is no whit more wonderful than that a lizard's tail chopped off runs about by itself, or that a dog can scent a foe or a thief whilst the foe or the thief is yet miles away. All these things are most wonderful, or not at all so,—just as you like.

In a little while she bore another child: this time it was a fine fair creature, quite perfect in its hues and shapes. "I never saw a prettier!" said an emperor butterfly, pausing near for a moment; at that moment the knife of the gardener severed the rosebud's stalk.

"The lady wants one for her bouquet de corsage: she goes to the opera to-night," the man said to another man, as he took the young tea-rose.

"What is the opera?" asked the mother-rose wearily of the butterfly. He did not know; but his cousin the death's-head moth, asleep under a magnolia-leaf, looked down with a grim smile on his quaint face.

"It is where everything dies in ten seconds," he answered. "It is a circle of fire; many friends of mine have flown in, none ever returned: your daughter will shrivel up and perish miserably. One pays for glory."

The rose-tree shivered through all her stalks ; but she was still proud, and tried to think that all this was said only out of envy. What should an old death's-head moth know, whose eyes were so weak that a farthing rushlight blinded them ?

So she lifted herself a little higher, and would not even see that the *Banksiæ* were nodding to her ; and as for her old friend the blackbird, how vulgar he looked, bobbing up and down hunting worms and woodlice ! could anything be more outrageously vulgar than that staring yellow beak of his ? She twisted herself round not to see him, and felt quite annoyed that he went on and sang just the same, unconscious of, or indifferent to, her coldness.

With each successive summer *Rosa Damascena* became more integrally and absolutely a *Rosa Indica*, and suffered in proportion to her fashion and fame.

True, people came continually to look at her, and especially in May-time would cry aloud, "What a beautiful *Niphétos* !" But then she was bereaved of all her offspring, for, being of the race of *Niphétos*, they were precious, and one would go to die in an hour in a hot ball-room, and another to perish in a *Sèvres* vase, where the china indeed was exquisite but the water was foul, and others went to be suffocated in the vicious gases of what the mortals call an opera-box, and others were pressed to death behind hard diamonds in a woman's bosom ; in one way or another they each and all perished miserably. She herself also lost many of her once luxuriant leaves, and had a little scanty foliage, red-brown in summer, instead of the thick, dark-green clothing that she had worn when a

rustic maiden. Not a day passed but the knife stabbed her; when the knife had nothing to take she was barren and chilly, for she had lost the happy power of looking beautiful all the year round, which once she had possessed.

One day came when she was taken up out of the ground and borne into a glass house, placed in a large pot, and lifted up on to a pedestal, and left in a delicious atmosphere, with patrician plants all around her with long Latin names, and strange, rare beauties of their own. She bore bud after bud in this crystal temple, and became a very crown of blossom; and her spirit grew so elated, and her vanity so supreme, that she ceased to remember she had ever been a simple *Rosa Damascena*, except that she was always saying to herself, "How great I am! how great I am!" which she might have noticed that those born ladies, the *Devonensis* and the *Louise de Savoie*, never did. But she noticed nothing except her own beauty, which she could see in a mirror that was let into the opposite wall of the greenhouse. Her blossoms were many and all quite perfect, and no knife touched them; and though to be sure she was still very scantily clothed so far as foliage went, yet she was all the more fashionable for that, so what did it matter?

One day, when her beauty was at its fullest perfection, she heard all the flowers about her bending and whispering with rustling and murmuring, saying, "Who will be chosen? who will be chosen?"

Chosen for what?

They did not talk much to her, because she was but a new-comer and a parvenue, but she gathered firm

them in a little time that there was to be a ball for a marriage festivity at the house to which the greenhouse was attached. Each flower wondered if it would be chosen to go to it. The azaleas knew they would go, because they were in their pink or rose ball-dresses all ready; but no one else was sure. The rose-tree grew quite sick and faint with hope and fear. Unless she went, she felt that life was not worth the living. She had no idea what a ball might be, but she knew that it was another form of greatness, when she was all ready, too, and so beautiful!

The gardener came and sauntered down the glass house, glancing from one to another. The hearts of all beat high. The azaleas only never changed color: they were quite sure of themselves. Who could do without them in February?

"Oh, take me! take me! take me!" prayed the rose-tree, in her foolish, longing, arrogant heart.

Her wish was given her. The lord of their fates smiled when he came to where she stood.

"This shall be for the place of honor," he murmured, and he lifted her out of the large vase she lived in on to a trestle and summoned his boys to bear her away. The very azaleas themselves grew pale with envy.

As for the rose-tree herself, she would not look at any one; she was carried through the old garden straight past the Banksiæ, but she would make them no sign; and as for the blackbird, she hoped a cat had eaten him! Had he not known her as Rosa Damascena?

She was borne bodily, roots and all, carefully

wrapped up in soft matting, and taken into the great house.

It was a very great house, a very grand house, and there was to be a marvellous feast in it, and a prince and princess from over the seas were that night to honor the mistress of it by their presence. All this Rosa Indica had gathered from the chatter of the flowers, and when she came into the big palace she saw many signs of excitement and confusion: servants out of livery were running up against one another in their hurry-scurry; miles and miles, it seemed, of crimson carpeting were being unrolled all along the terrace and down the terrace steps, since by some peculiar but general impression royal personages are supposed not to like to walk upon anything else, though myself I think they must get quite sick of red carpet, seeing so very much of it spread for them wherever they go. To Rosa Indica, however, the bright scarlet carpeting looked very handsome, and seemed, indeed, a foretaste of heaven.

Soon she was carried quite inside the house, into an immense room with a beautiful dome-shaped ceiling, painted in fresco three centuries before, and fresh as though it had been painted yesterday. At the end of the room was a great chair, gilded and painted, too, three centuries before, and covered with velvet, gold-fringed and powdered with golden grasshoppers. "That common insect here!" thought Rosa, in surprise, for she did not know that the chief of the house, long, long, long ago, when sleeping in the heat of noon in Palestine in the first crusade, had been awakened by a grasshopper lighting on his eyelids, and so had been

aroused in time to put on his armor and do battle with a troop attacking Saracen cavalry, and beat them; wherefore, in gratitude, he had taken the humble field-creature as his badge for evermore.

They set the roots of *Rosa Indica* now into a vase,—such a vase! the royal blue of Sèvres, if you please, and with border and scroll work and all kinds of wonders and glories painted on it and gilded on it, and standing four feet high if it stood one inch! I could never tell you the feelings of Rosa if I wrote a thousand pages. Her heart thrilled so with ecstasy that she almost dropped all her petals, only her vanity came to her aid, and helped her to control in a measure her emotions. The gardeners broke off a good deal of mould about her roots, and they muttered one to another something about her dying of it. But Rosa thought no more of that than a pretty lady does when her physician tells her she will die of tight lacing; not she! She was going to be put into that Sèvres vase.

This was enough for her, as it is enough for the lady that she is going to be put into a hundred-guinea ball-gown.

In she went. It was certainly a tight fit, as the gown often is, and Rosa felt nipped, strained, bruised, suffocated. But an old proverb has settled long ago that pride feels no pain, and perhaps the more foolish the pride the less is the pain that is felt—for the moment.

They set her well into the vase, putting green moss over her roots, and then they stretched her branches out over a gilded trellis-work at the back of the vase. And very beautiful she looked; and she was at the

head of the room, and a huge mirror down at the farther end opposite to her showed her own reflection. She was in paradise !

"At last," she thought to herself, "at last they have done me justice !"

The azaleas were all crowded round underneath her, like so many kneeling courtiers, but they were not taken out of their pots ; they were only shrouded in moss. They had no Sèvres vases. And they had always thought so much of themselves and given themselves such airs, for there is nothing so vain as an azalea,—except, indeed, a camellia, which is the most conceited flower in the world, though, to do it justice, it is also the most industrious, for it is busy getting ready its next winter buds whilst the summer is still hot and broad on the land, which is very wise and prudent in it and much to be commended.

Well, there was Rosa Indica at the head of the room in the Sèvres vase, and very proud and triumphant she felt throned there, and the azaleas, of course, were whispering enviously underneath her, "Well, after all, she was only Rosa Damascena not so *very* long ago."

Yes, *they knew* ! What a pity it was ! They knew she had once been Rosa Damascena and never would wash it out of their minds,—the tiresome, spiteful, malignant creatures !

Even aloft in the vase, in all her glory, the rose could have shed tears of mortification, and was ready to cry, like Themistocles, "Can nobody give us oblivion ?"

Nobody could give that, for the azaleas, who were

so irritated at being below her, were not at all likely to hold their tongues. But she had great consolations and triumphs, and began to believe that, let them say what they chose, she had never been a common garden-wall rose. The ladies of the house came in and praised her to the skies; the children ran up to her and clapped their hands and shouted for joy at her beauty; a wonderful big green bird came in and hopped before her, cocked his head on one side, and said to her, "Pretty Poll! oh, *such* a pretty Poll!"

"Even the birds adore me here!" she thought, not dreaming he was only talking of himself; for when you are as vain as was this poor dear Rosa, creation is pervaded with your own perfections, and even when other people say only "Poll!" you feel sure they are saying "You!" or they ought to be if they are not.

So there she stood in her grand Sèvres pot, and she was ready to cry with the poet, "The world may end to-night!" Alas! it was not the world which was to end. Let me hasten to close this true heart-rending history.

There was a great dinner as the sun began to set, and the mistress of the house came in on the arm of the great foreign prince; and what did the foreign prince do but look up at Rosa, straight up at her, and over the heads of the azaleas, and say to his hostess, "What a beautiful rose you have there! A Niphétos, is it not?"

And her mistress, who had known her long as simple Rosa Damascena, answered, "Yes, sir; it is a Niphétos."

Oh to have lived for that hour! The silly thing

thought it worth all her suffering from the gardener's knife, all the loss of her robust health and delightful power of flowering in all four seasons. She was a Niphétos, really and truly a Niphétos! and not one syllable hinted as to her origin! She began to believe she had been *born* a tea-rose!

The dinner was long and gorgeous; the guests were dazzling in jewels and in decorations; the table was loaded with old plate and rare china; the prince made a speech and used her as a simile of love and joy and purity and peace. The rose felt giddy with triumph and with the fumes of the wines around her. Her vase was of purple and gold, and all the voices round her said, "Oh, the beautiful rose!" No one noticed the azaleas. How she wished that the blackbird could see for a minute, if the cat would gobble him up the next!

The day sped on; the châtelaine and her guests went away; the table was rearranged; the rose-tree was left in its place of honor; the lights were lit; there was the sound of music near at hand; they were dancing in other chambers.

Above her hung a chandelier,—a circle of innumerable little flames and drops that looked like dew or diamonds. She thought it was the sun come very close. After it had been there a little while it grew very hot, and its rays hurt her.

"Can you not go a little farther away, O Sun?" she said to it. It was flattered at being taken for the sun, but answered her, "I am fixed in my place. Do you not understand astronomy?"

She did not know what astronomy was, so was

silent, and the heat hurt her. Still, she was in the place of honor: so she was happy.

People came and went; but nobody noticed her. They ate and drank, they laughed and made love, and then went away to dance again, and the music went on all night long, and all night long the heat of the chandelier poured down on her.

"I am in the place of honor," she said to herself a thousand times in each hour.

But the heat scorched her, and the fumes of the wines made her faint. She thought of the sweet fresh air of the old garden where the *Banksiæ* were. The garden was quite near, but the windows were closed, and there were the walls now between her and it. She was in the place of honor. But she grew sick and waxed faint as the burning rays of the artificial light shining above her seemed to pierce through and through her like lances of steel. The night seemed very long. She was tired.

She was erect there on her Sèvres throne, with the light thrilling and throbbing upon her in every point. But she thought of the sweet, dark, fresh nights in the old home where the blackbird had slept, and she longed for them.

The dancers came and went, the music thrummed and screamed, the laughter was both near and far; the rose-tree was amidst it all. Yet she felt alone,—all alone! as travellers may feel in a desert. Hour succeeded hour; the night wore on apace; the dancers ceased to come; the music ceased, too; the light still burned down upon her, and the scorching fever of it consumed her like fire.

Then there came silence,—entire silence. Servants came round and put out all the lights—hundreds and hundreds of lights—quickly one by one. Other servants went to the windows and threw them wide open to let out the fumes of wine. Without, the night was changing into the gray that tells of earliest dawn. But it was a bitter frost; the grass was white with it; the air was ice. In the great darkness that had now fallen on all the scene this deadly cold came around the rose-tree and wrapped her in it as in a shroud.

She shivered from head to foot.

The cruel glacial coldness crept into the hot banquetting-chamber, and moved round it in white, misty circles, like steam, like ghosts of the gay guests that had gone. All was dark and chill,—dark and chill as any grave!

What worth was the place of honor now?

Was this the place of honor?

The rose-tree swooned and drooped! A servant's rough hand shook down its worn beauty into a heap of fallen leaves. When they carried her out dead in the morning, the little Banksia-buds, safe hidden from the frost within their stems, waiting to come forth when the summer should come, murmured to one another,—

“She had her wish; she was great. This way the gods grant foolish prayers, and punish discontent!”

THE CHILD OF URBINO

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It was in the year of grace 1490, in the reign of Guidobaldo, Lord of Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino,—the year, by the way, of the birth of that most illustrious and gracious lady Vittoria Colonna.

It was in the spring of the year, in that mountain-eyrie beloved of the Muses and coveted of the Borgia, that a little boy stood looking out of a grated casement into the calm sunshiny day. He was a pretty boy, with hazel eyes, and fair hair cut straight above his brows; he wore a little blue tunic with some embroidery about the throat of it, and had in his hand a little round flat cap of the same color. He was sad of heart this merry morning, for a dear friend of his, a friend ten years older than himself, had gone the night before on a journey over the mountains to Maestro Francesco at Bologna, there to be bound apprentice to that gentle artist. This friend, Timoteo della Vita, had been very dear to the child, had played with him and jested with him, made him toys and told him stories, and he was very full of pain at Timoteo's loss. Yet he told himself not to mind, for had not Timoteo said to him, "I go as goldsmith's 'prentice to the best of men; but I mean to become a painter"? And the child understood that to be a painter was to be the

greatest and wisest the world held ; he quite understood that, for he was Raffaele, the seven-year-old son of Signor Giovanni Sanzio.

He was a very happy little boy here in this stately yet homely and kindly Urbino, where his people had come for refuge when the lances of Malatesta had ravaged and ruined their homestead. He had the dearest old grandfather in all the world ; he had a loving mother, and he had a father who was very tender to him, and painted him among the angels of heaven, and was always full of pleasant conceits and admirable learning, and such true love of art that the child breathed it with every breath, as he could breathe the sweetness of a cowslip-bell when he held one in his hands up to his nostrils.

It was good in those days to live in old Urbino. It was not, indeed, so brilliant a place as it became in a later day, when Ariosto came there, and Bembo and Castiglione and many another witty and learned gentleman, and the Courts of Love were held with ingenious rhyme and pretty sentiment, sad only for wantonness. But, if not so brilliant, it was homelier, simpler, full of virtue, with a wise peace and tranquillity that joined hands with a stout courage. The burgher was good friends with his prince, and knew that in any trouble or perplexity he could go up to the palace, or stop the duke in the market-place, and be sure of sympathy and good counsel. There were a genuine love of beautiful things, a sense of public duty and of public spirit, a loyal temper and a sage contentment, among the good people of that time, which made them happy and prosperous.

All work was solidly and thoroughly done, living was cheap, and food good and plentiful, much better and more plentiful than it is now; in the fine old houses every stone was sound, every bit of ornament well wrought, men made their nests to live in and to pass to their children and children's children after them, and had their own fancies and their own traditions recorded in the iron-work of their casements and in the wood-work of their doors. They had their happy day of honest toil from matins bell to evensong, and then walked out or sat about in the calm evening air and looked down on the plains below that were rich with grain and fruit and woodland, and talked and laughed among each other, and were content with their own pleasant, useful lives, not burnt up with envy of desire to be some one else, as in our sickly, hurrying time most people are.

Yes, life must have been very good in those old days in old Urbino, better than it is anywhere in ours.

Can you not picture to yourself good, shrewd, wise Giovanni Sanzio, with his old father by his side, and his little son running before him, in the holy evening time of a feast-day, with the deep church-bells swaying above-head, and the last sun-rays smiting the frescoed walls, the stone bastions, the blazoned standard on the castle roof, the steep city rocks shelving down into the greenery of cherry-orchard and of pear-tree? I can, whenever I shut my eyes and recall Urbino as it was; and would it had been mine to live then in that mountain-home, and meet that divine child going along his happy smiling way, garnering unconsciously in his in-

fant soul all the beautiful sights and sounds around him, to give them in his manhood to the world.

"Let him alone: he will paint all this some day," said his wise father, who loved to think that his brushes and his colors would pass in time to Raffaele, whose hands would be stronger to hold them than his own had been. And, whether he would ever paint it or not, the child never tired of thus looking from his eyrie on the rocks and counting all that passed below through the blowing corn under the leafy orchard boughs.

There were so many things to see in Urbino in that time, looking so over the vast green valley below: a clump of spears, most likely, as men-at-arms rode through the trees; a string of market-folk bringing in the produce of the orchards or the fields; perchance a red-robed cardinal on a white mule with glittering housings, behind him a sumpter train rich with baggage, furniture, gold and silver plate; maybe the duke's hunting-party going out or coming homeward with caracoling steeds, beautiful hounds straining at their leash, hunting-horns sounding merrily over the green country; maybe a band of free lances, with plumes tossing, steel glancing, bannerets fluttering against the sky; or maybe a quiet gray-robed string of monks or pilgrims singing the hymn sung before Jerusalem, treading the long lush grass with sandalled feet, coming towards the city, to crowd slowly and gladly up its rocky height. Do you not wish with me you could stand in the window with Raffaele to see the earth as it was then?

No doubt the good folks of Urbino laughed at him often for a little moonstruck dreamer, so many hours

did he stand looking, looking,—only looking,—as eyes have a right to do that see well and not altogether as others see.

Happily for him, the days of his childhood were times of peace, and he did not behold, as his father had done, the torches light up the street and the flames devour the homesteads.

At this time Urbino was growing into fame for its pottery-work: those big dishes and bowls, those marriage-plates and pharmacy-jars, which it made, were beginning to rival the products of its neighbor Gubbio, and when its duke wished to send a bridal gift, or a present on other festal occasions, he oftenest chose some service or some rare platter of his own Urbino ware. Now, pottery had not then taken the high place among the arts of Italy that it was destined very soon to do. As you will learn when you are older, after the Greeks and the Christians had exhausted all that was beautiful in shape and substance of clay vases, the art seemed to die out, and the potters and the pottery-painters died with it, or at any rate went to sleep for a great many centuries, whilst soldiers and prelates, nobles and mercenaries, were trampling to and fro all over the land and disputing it, and carrying fire and torch, steel and desolation, with them in their quarrels and covetousness. But now, the reign of the late good duke, great Federigo, having been favorable to the Marches (as we call his province now), the potters and pottery-painters, with other gentle craftsmen, had begun to look up again, and the beneficent fires of their humble ovens had begun to burn in Castel Durante, in Pesaro, in Faenza, in Gubbio, and in Urbino itself. The great days had

not yet come: Maestro Giorgio was but a youngster, and Orazio Fontane not born, nor the clever baker Prestino either, nor the famous Fra Xanto; but there was a Don Giorgio even then in Gubbio, of whose work, alas! one plate now at the Louvre is all we have; and here in the ducal city on the hill rich and noble things were already being made in the stout and lustrous majolica that was destined to acquire later on so wide a ceramic fame. Jars and bowls and platters, oval dishes and ewers and basins, and big-bodied, metal-welded pharmacy-vases were all made and painted at Urbino whilst Raffaele Sanzio was running about on rosy infantine feet. There was a master-potter of the Montefeltro at that time, one Maestro Benedetto Ronconi, whose name had not become world-renowned as Orazio Fontane's and Maestro Giorgio's did in the following century, yet who in that day enjoyed the honor of all the duchy, and did things very rare and fine in the Urbino ware. He lived within a stone's throw of Giovanni Sanzio, and was a gray-haired, handsome, somewhat stern and pompous man, now more than middle-aged, who had one beauteous daughter, by name Pacifica. He cherished Pacifica well, but not so well as he cherished the things he wrought,—the deep round nuptial plates and oval massive dishes that he painted with Scriptural stories and strange devices, and landscapes such as those he saw around, and flowing scrolls with Latin mottoes in black letters, and which, when thus painted, he consigned with an anxiously-beating heart to the trial of the ovens, and which sometimes came forth from the trial all cracked and blurred and marred, and sometimes emerged in

triumph and came into his trembling hands iridescent and lovely with those lustrous and opaline hues which we admire in them to this day as the especial glory of majolica.

Maestro Benedetto was an ambitious and vain man, and had had a hard, laborious manhood, working at his potter's wheel and painter's brush before Urbino ware was prized in Italy or even in the duchy. Now, indeed, he was esteemed at his due worth, and his work was so also, and he was passably rich, and known as a good artist beyond the Marches; but there was a younger man over at Gubbio, the Don Giorgio who was precursor of unequalled Maestro Giorgio Andreoli, who surpassed him, and made him sleep o' nights on thorns, as envy makes all those to do who take her as their bedfellow.

The house of Maestro Benedetto was a long stone building, with a loggia at the back all overclimbed by hardy rose-trees, and looking on a garden that was more than half an orchard, and in which grew abundantly pear-trees, plum-trees, and wood strawberries. The lancet windows of his workshop looked on all this quiet greenery. There were so many such pleasant workshops then in the land,—calm, godly, home-like places, filled from without with song of birds and scent of herbs and blossoms. Nowadays men work in crowded, stinking cities, in close factory chambers; and their work is barren as their lives are.

The little son of neighbor Sanzio ran in and out this bigger, wider house and garden of Maestro Benedetto at his pleasure, for the maiden Pacifica was always glad to see him, and even the sombre master-potter

would unbend to him and show him how to lay the color on to the tremulous fugitive unbaked biscuit.

Pacifica was a lovely young woman of some seventeen or eighteen summers; and perhaps Raffaelle was but remembering her when he painted in his after-years the face of his Madonna di San Sisto. He loved her as he loved everything that was beautiful and every one who was kind; and almost better than his own beloved father's studio, almost better than his dear old grandsire's cheerful little shop, did he love this grave, silent, sweet-smelling, sun-pierced, shadowy old house of Maestro Benedetto.

Maestro Benedetto had four apprentices or pupils in that time learning to become *figuli*, but the one whom Raffaelle liked the most (and Pacifica too) was one Luca Torelli, of a village above in the mountains, —a youth with a noble dark pensive beauty of his own, and a fearless gait, and a supple, tall, slender figure that would have looked well in the light coat of mail and silken doublet of a man-at-arms. In sooth, the spirit of Messer Luca was more made for war and its risks and glories than for the wheel and the brush of the bottega; but he had loved Pacifica ever since he had come down one careless holy-day into Urbino, and had bound himself to her father's service in a heedless moment of eagerness to breathe the same air and dwell under the same roof as she did. He had gained little for his pains: to see her at mass and at meal-times, now and then to be allowed to bring water from the well for her or feed her pigeons, to see her gray gown go down between the orchard trees and catch the sunlight, to hear the hum of her spinning.

wheel, the thrum of her viol,—this was the uttermost he got of joy in two long years; and how he envied Raffaele running along the stone floor of the loggia to leap into her arms, to hang upon her skirts, to pick the summer fruit with her, and sort with her the autumn herbs for drying!

“I love Pacifica!” he would say, with a groan, to Raffaele; and Raffaele would say, with a smile, “Ah, Luca, so do I!”

“It is not the same thing, my dear,” sighed Luca; “I want her for my wife.”

“I shall have no wife; I shall marry myself to painting,” said Raffaele, with a little grave wise face looking out from under the golden roof of his fair hair. For he was never tired of watching his father painting the saints with their branch of palm on their ground of blue or of gold, or Maestro Benedetto making the dull clay glow with angels’ wings and prophets’ robes and holy legends told in color.

Now, one day as Raffaele was standing and looking thus at his favorite window in the potter’s house, his friend the handsome, black-browed Luca, who was also standing there, did sigh so deeply and so deplorably that the child was startled from his dreams.

“Good Luca, what ails you?” he murmured, winding his arms about the young man’s knees.

“Oh, ‘Faello!’ mourned the apprentice, woefully. “Here is such a chance to win the hand of Pacifica if only I had talent,—such talent as that Giorgio of Gubbio has! If the good Lord had only gifted me with a master’s skill, instead of all this bodily strength

and sinew, like a wild hog of the woods, which avails me nothing here!"

"What chance is it?" asked Raffaele, "and what is there new about Pacifica? She told me nothing, and I was with her an hour."

"Dear simple one, she knows nothing of it," said Luca, heaving another tremendous sigh from his heart's deepest depths. "You must know that a new order has come in this very forenoon from the duke; he wishes a dish and a jar of the very finest and firmest majolica to be painted with the story of Esther, and made ready in three months from this date, to then go as his gifts to his cousins of Gonzaga. He has ordered that no cost be spared in the work, but that the painting thereof be of the best that can be produced, and the prize he will give is fifty scudi. Now, Maestro Benedetto, having known some time, it seems, of this order, has had made in readiness several large oval dishes and beautiful big-bellied jars: he gives one of each to each of his pupils,—to myself, to Berengario, to Tito, and Zenone. The master is sorely distraught that his eyesight permits him not himself to execute the duke's commands; but it is no secret that should one of us be so fortunate as to win the duke's approbation, the painter who does so shall become his partner here and shall have the hand of Pacifica. Some say that he has only put forth this promise as a stimulus to get the best work done of which his bottega is capable; but I know Maestro Benedetto too well to deem him guilty of any such evasion. What he has said he will carry out; if the vase and the dish win the duke's praise, they will also win Pacifica. Now you see, 'Faello mine, why I

am so bitterly sad of heart, for I am a good craftsman enough at the wheel and the furnace, and I like not ill the handling and the moulding of the clay, but at the painting of the clay I am but a tyro, and Berengario or even the little Zenone will beat me ; of that I am sure."

Raffaelle heard all this in silence, leaning his elbows on his friend's knee, and his chin on the palms of his own hands. He knew that the other pupils were better painters by far than his Luca, though not one of them was such a good-hearted or noble-looking youth, and for none of them did the maiden Pacifica care.

"How long a time is given for the jar and the dish to be ready?" he asked, at length.

"Three months, my dear," said Luca, with a sigh sadder than ever. "But if it were three years, what difference would it make? You cannot cudgel the divine grace of art into a man with blows as you cudgel speed into a mule, and I shall be a dolt at the end of the time as I am now. What said your good father to me but yesternight?—and he is good to me and does not despise me. He said, 'Luca, my son, it is of no more avail for you to sigh for Pacifica than for the moon. Were she mine I would give her to you, for you have a heart of gold, but Signor Benedetto will not; for never, I fear me, will you be able to decorate anything more than an apothecary's mortar or a barber's basin. If I hurt you, take it not ill; I mean kindness, and were I a stalwart youth like you I would go try my fortunes in the Free Companies in France or Spain, or down in Rome, for you are made for a soldier.' That was the best even your father could say for me, 'Faello."

"But Pacifica," said the child,—*"Pacifica would not wish you to join the Free Companies?"*

"God-knows," said Luca, hopelessly. *"Perhaps she would not care."*

"I am sure she would," said Raffaelle, *"for she does love you, Luca, though she cannot say so, being but a girl, and Signor Benedetto against you. But that red-cap you tamed for her, how she loves it, how she caresses it, and half is for you, Luca, half for the bird!"*

Luca kissed him.

But the tears rolled down the poor youth's face, for he was much in earnest and filled with despair.

"Even if she did, if she do," he murmured, hopelessly, *"she never will let me know it, since her father forbids a thought of me; and now here is this trial of skill at the duke's order come to make things worse, and if that swaggering Berengario of Fano win her, then truly will I join the free lances and pray heaven send me swift shrive and shroud."*

Raffaelle was very pensive for a while; then he raised his head and said,—

"I have thought of something, Luca. But I do not know whether you will let me try it."

"You angel child! What would your old Luca deny to you? But as for helping me, my dear, put that thought out of your little mind forever, for no one can help me, 'Faello, not the saints themselves, since I was born a dolt!"

Raffaelle kissed him, and said, *"Now listen!"*

A few days later Signor Benedetto informed his pupils in ceremonious audience of the duke's command and of his own intentions; he did not pronounce his

daughter's name to the youths, but he spoke in terms that were clear enough to assure them that whoever had the good fortune and high merit to gain the duke's choice of his pottery should have the honor of becoming associate in his own famous bottega. Now, it had been known in Urbino ever since Pacifica had gone to her first communion that whoever pleased her father well enough to become his partner would have also to please her as her husband. Not much attention was given to maidens' wishes in those times, and no one thought the master-potter either unjust or cruel in thus suiting himself before he suited his daughter. And what made the hearts of all the young men quake and sink the lowest was the fact that Signor Benedetto offered the competition not only to his own apprentices but to any native of the duchy of Urbino. For who could tell what hero might not step forth from obscurity and gain the great prize of this fair hand of Pacifica's? And with her hand would go many a broad gold ducat, and heritage of the wide old gray stone house, and many an old jewel and old brocade that were kept there in dusky sweet-smelling cabinets, and also more than one good piece of land, smiling with corn and fruit-trees, outside the gates in the lower pastures to the westward.

Luca, indeed, never thought of these things, but the other three pupils did, and other youths as well. Had it not been for the limitation as to birth within the duchy, many a gallant young painter from the other side of the Apennines, many a lusty *vasalino* or *boccalino* from the workshops of fair Florence herself, or from the Lombard cities, might have travelled there

in hot haste as fast as horses could carry them, and come to paint the clay for the sake of so precious a recompense. But Urbino men they had to be; and poor Luca, who was so full of despair that he could almost have thrown himself headlong from the rocks, was thankful to destiny for even so much slender mercy as this,—that the number of his rivals was limited.

“Had I been you,” Giovanni Sanzio ventured once to say respectfully to Signor Benedetto, “I think I should have picked out for my son-in-law the best youth that I knew, not the best painter; for be it said in all reverence, my friend, the greatest artist is not always the truest man, and by the hearthstone humble virtues have sometimes high claim.”

Then Signor Benedetto had set his stern face like a flint, knowing very well what youth Messer Giovanni would have liked to name to him.

“I have need of a good artist in my bottega to keep up its fame,” he had said, stiffly. “My vision is not what it was, and I should be loath to see Urbino ware fall back, whilst Pesaro and Gubbio and Castel-Durante gain ground every day. Pacifica must pay the penalty, if penalty there be, for being the daughter of a great artist.”

Mirthful, keen-witted Sanzio smiled to himself, and went his way in silence; for he who loved Andrea Mantegna did not bow down in homage before the old master-potter’s estimation of himself, which was in truth somewhat overweening in its vanity.

“Poor Pacifica!” he thought: “if only my *Faello* were but some decade older!”

He, who could not foresee the future, the splendid, wondrous, unequalled future that awaited his young son, wished nothing better for him than a peaceful painter's life here in old Urbino, under the friendly shadow of the Montefeltro's palace-walls.

Meanwhile, where think you was Raffaele? Half the day, or all the day, and every day whenever he could? Where think you was he? Well, in the attic of Luca, before a bowl and a dish almost as big as himself. The attic was a breezy, naked place, underneath the arches supporting the roof of Maestro Benedetto's dwelling. Each pupil had one of these garrets to himself,—a rare boon, for which Luca came to be very thankful, for without it he could not have sheltered his angel; and the secret that Raffaele had whispered to him that day of the first conference had been, "*Let me try and paint it!*"

For a long time Luca had been afraid to comply, had only forborne indeed from utter laughter at the idea from his love and reverence for the little speaker. Baby Sanzio, who was only just seven years old as the April tulips reddened the corn, painting a majolica dish and vase to go to the Gonzaga of Mantua! The good fellow could scarcely restrain his shouts of mirth at the audacious fancy; and nothing had kept him grave but the sight of that most serious face of Raffaele, looking up to his with serene, sublime self-confidence, nay, perhaps, rather, confidence in heaven and in heaven's gifts.

"*Let me try!*" said the child a hundred times. He would tell no one, only Luca would know; and if he failed—well, there would only be the spoiled pottery

to pay for, and had he not two whole ducats that the duke had given him when the court had come to behold his father's designs for the altar-frescoes at San Dominico di Cagli?

So utterly in earnest was he, and so intense and blank was Luca's absolute despair, that the young man had in turn given way to his entreaties. "Never can I do aught," he thought, bitterly, looking at his own clumsy designs. "And sometimes by the help of cherubs the saints work miracles."

"It will be no miracle," said Raffaello, hearing him murmur this: "it will be myself, and that which the dear God has put into me."

From that hour Luca let him do what he would, and through all these lovely early summer days the child came and shut himself up in the garret, and studied, and thought, and worked, and knitted his pretty fair brows, and smiled in tranquil satisfaction, according to the mood he was in and the progress of his labors.

Giovanni Sanzio went away at that time to paint an altar-piece over at Città di Castello, and his little son for once was glad he was absent. Messer Giovanni would surely have remarked the long and frequent visits of Raffaello to the attic, and would, in all likelihood, have obliged him to pore over his Latin or to take exercise in the open fields; but his mother said nothing, content that he should be amused and safe, and knowing well that Pacifica loved him and would let him come to no harm under her roof. Pacifica herself did wonder that he deserted her so perpetually for the garret. But one day when she questioned him the sweet-faced rogue clung to her and murmured, "Oh

Pacifica, I do want Luca to win you, because he loves you so; and I do love you both!" And she grew pale, and answered him, "Ah, dear, if he could!" and then said never a word more, but went to her distaff; and Raffaelle saw great tears fall off her lashes down among the flax.

She thought he went to the attic to watch how Luca painted, and loved him more than ever for that, but knew in the hopelessness of her heart—as Luca also knew it in his—that the good and gallant youth would never be able to create anything that would go as the duke's gifts to the Gonzaga of Mantua. And she did care for Luca! She had spoken to him but rarely indeed, yet passing in and out of the same doors, and going to the same church offices, and dwelling always beneath the same roof, he had found means of late for a word, a flower, a serenade. And he was so handsome and so brave, and so gentle, too, and so full of deference. Poor Pacifica cared not in the least whether he could paint or not. He could have made her happy.

In the attic Raffaelle passed the most anxious hours of all his sunny little life. He would not allow Luca even to look at what he did. He barred the door and worked; when he went away he locked his work up in a wardrobe. The swallows came in and out of the unglazed window, and fluttered all around him; the morning sunbeams came in too, and made a nimbus round his golden head, like that which his father gilded above the heads of saints. Raffaelle worked on, not looking off, though clang of trumpet, or fanfare of cymbal, often told him there was much going on worth

looking at down below. He was only seven years old, but he labored as earnestly as if he were a man grown, his little rosy fingers gripping that pencil which was to make him in life and death famous as kings are not famous, and let his tender body lie in its last sleep in the Pantheon of Rome.

He had covered hundreds of sheets with designs before he had succeeded in getting embodied the ideas that haunted him. When he had pleased himself at last, he set to work to transfer his imaginations to the clay in color in the subtile luminous metallic enamel that characterizes Urbino majolica.

Ah, how glad he was now that his father had let him draw from the time he was two years old, and that of late Messer Benedetto had shown him something of the mysteries of painting on biscuit and producing the metallic lustre which was the especial glory of the pottery of the duchy!

How glad he was, and how his little heart bounded and seemed to sing in this his first enjoyment of the joyous liberties and powers of creative work!

A well-known writer has said that genius is the power of taking pains; he should have said rather that genius *has* this power also, but that first and foremost it possesses the power of spontaneous and exquisite production without effort and with delight.

Luca looked at him (not at his work, for the child had made him promise not to do so) and began to marvel at his absorption, his intentness, the evident facility with which he worked: the little figure, leaning over the great dish on the bare board of the table, with the oval opening of the window and the blue sky

beyond it, began to grow sacred to him with more than the sanctity of childhood. Raffaello's face grew very serious, too, and lost its color, and his large hazel eyes looked very big and grave and dark.

"Perhaps Signor Giovanni will be angry with me if ever he know," thought poor Luca; but it was too late to alter anything now. The child Sanzio had become his master.

So Raffaello, unknown to any one else, worked on and on there in the attic while the tulips bloomed and withered, and the honeysuckle was in flower in the hedges, and the wheat and barley were being cut in the quiet fields lying far down below in the sunshine. For midsummer was come; the three months all but a week had passed by. It was known that every one was ready to compete for the duke's choice.

One afternoon Raffaello took Luca by the hand and said to him, "Come."

He led the young man up to the table, beneath the unglazed window, where he had passed so many of these ninety days of the spring and summer.

Luca gave a great cry, and stood gazing, gazing, gazing. Then he fell on his knees and embraced the little feet of the child: it was the first homage that he, whose life became one beautiful song of praise, received from man.

"Dear Luca," he said, softly, "do not do that. If it be indeed good, let us thank God."

What his friend saw were the great oval dish and the great jar or vase standing with the sunbeams full upon them, and the brushes and the tools and the colors all strewn around. And they shone with lustrous

opaline hues and wondrous flame-like glories and gleaming iridescence, like melted jewels, and there were all manner of graceful symbols and classic designs wrought upon them; and their borders were garlanded with cherubs and flowers, bearing the arms of Montefeltro, and the landscapes were the tender, homely landscapes round about Urbino; and the mountains had the solemn radiance that the Apennines wore at evening-time, and amidst the figures there was one supreme, white-robed, golden-crowned Esther, to whom the child painter had given the face of Pacifica. And this wondrous creation, wrought by a baby's hand, had safely and secretly passed the ordeal of the furnace, and had come forth without spot or flaw.

Luca ceased not from kneeling at the feet of Raffaele, as ever since has kneeled the world.

"Oh, wondrous boy! Oh, angel sent unto men!" sighed the poor 'prentice, as he gazed; and his heart was so full that he burst into tears.

"Let us thank God," said little Raffaele, again; and he joined his small hands that had wrought this miracle, and said his *Laus Domini*.

When the precious jar and the great platter were removed to the wardrobe and shut up in safety behind the steel wards of the locker, Luca said, timidly, feeling twenty years in age behind the wisdom of this divine child, "But, dearest boy, I do not see how your marvellous and most exquisite accomplishment can advantage me. Even if you would allow it to pass as mine, I could not accept such a thing: it would be a fraud, a shame: not even to win Pacifica could I consent."

"Be not so hasty, good friend," said Raffaele.

"Wait just a little longer yet and see. I have my own idea. Do trust in me."

"Heaven speaks in you, that I believe," said Luca, humbly.

Raffaëlle answered not, but ran down-stairs, and passing Pacifica, threw his arms about her in more than his usual affectionate caresses.

"Pacifica, be of good heart," he murmured, and would not be questioned, but ran homeward to his mother.

"Can it be that Luca has done well," thought Pacifica; but she feared the child's wishes had outrun his wisdom. He could not be any judge, a child of seven years, even though he were the son of that good and honest painter and poet, Giovanni Sanzio.

The next morning was midsummer day. Now, the pottery was all to be placed on this forenoon in the bottega of Signor Benedetto; and the Duke Guidobaldo was then to come and make his choice from amidst them; and the master-potter, a little because he was a courtier, and more because he liked to affect a mighty indifference and to show he had no favoritism, had declared that he would not himself see the competing works of art until the eyes of the Lord of Montefeltro also fell upon them.

As for Pacifica, she had locked herself in her chamber, alone with her intense agitation. The young men were swaggering about, and taunting each other, and boasting. Luca alone sat apart, thrumming an old lute. Giovanni Sanzio, who had ridden home at evening from Città di Castello, came in from his own house and put his hand on the youth's shoulder.

"I hear the Pesaro men have brought fine things. Take courage, my lad. Maybe we can entreat the duke to dissuade Pacifica's father from this tyrannous disposal of her hand."

Luca shook his head wearily.

There would be one beautiful thing there, indeed, he knew; but what use would that be to him?

"The child—the child——" he stammered, and then remembered that he must not disclose Raffaele's secret.

"My child?" said Signor Giovanni. "Oh, he will be here; he will be sure to be here: wherever there is a painted thing to be seen, there always, be sure, is Raffaele."

Then the good man sauntered within from the loggia, to exchange salutations with Ser Benedetto, who, in a suit of fine crimson with doublet of sad-colored velvet, was standing ready to advance bare-headed into the street as soon as the hoofs of the duke's charger should strike on the stones.

"You must be anxious in your thoughts," said Signor Giovanni to him. "They say a youth from Pesaro brings something fine: if you should find yourself bound to take a stranger into your work-room and your home——"

"If he be a man of genius he will be welcome," answered Messer Ronconi, pompously. "Be he of Pesaro, or of Fano, or of Castel-Durante, I go not back from my word: I keep my word, to my own hindrance even, ever."

"Let us hope it will bring you only joy and triumph here," said his neighbor, who knew him to be an honest

man and a true, if over-obstinate and too vain of his own place in Urbino.

"Our lord the duke!" shouted the people standing in the street; and Ser Benedetto walked out with stately tread to receive the honor of his master's visit to his bottega.

Raffaelle slipped noiselessly up to his father's side, and slid his little hand into Sanzio's.

"You are not surely afraid of our good Guidobaldo!" said his father, with a laugh and some little surprise, for Raffaelle was very pale, and his lower lip trembled a little.

"No," said the child, simply.

The young duke and his court came riding down the street, and paused before the old stone house of the master-potter,—splendid gentlemen, though only in their morning apparel, with noble Barbary steeds fretting under them, and little pages and liveried varlets about their steps. Usually, unless he went hunting or on a visit to some noble, Guidobaldo, like his father, walked about Urbino like any one of his citizens; but he knew the pompous and somewhat vainglorious temper of Messer Benedetto, and good-naturedly was willing to humor its harmless vanities. Bowing to the ground, the master-potter led the way, walking backward into his bottega; the courtiers followed their prince; Giovanni Sanzio with his little son and a few other privileged persons went in also at due distance. At the farther end of the workshop stood the pupils and the artists from Pesaro and other places in the duchy whose works were there in competition. In all there were some ten competitors: poor Luca, who had set

his own work on the table with the rest as he was obliged to do, stood hindmost of all, shrinking back, to hide his misery, into the deepest shadow of the deep-bayed latticed window.

On the narrow deal benches that served as tables on working-days to the pottery-painters were ranged the dishes and the jars, with a number attached to each,—no name to any, because Signor Benedetto was resolute to prove his own absolute disinterestedness in the matter of choice: he wished for the best artist. Prince Guidobaldo, doffing his plumed cap courteously, walked down the long room and examined each production in its turn. On the whole, the collection made a brave display of majolica, though he was perhaps a little disappointed at the result in each individual case, for he had wanted something out of the common run and absolutely perfect. Still, with fair words he complimented Signor Benedetto on the brave show, and only before the work of poor Luca was he entirely silent, since indeed silence was the greatest kindness he could show to it: the drawing was bold and regular, but the coloring was hopelessly crude, glaring, and ill-disposed.

At last, before a vase and a dish that stood modestly at the very farthest end of the deal bench, the duke gave a sudden exclamation of delight, and Signor Benedetto grew crimson with pleasure and surprise, and Giovanni Sanzio pressed a little nearer and tried to see over the shoulders of the gentlemen of the court, feeling sure that something rare and beautiful must have called forth that cry of wonder from the Lord of Montefeltro, and having seen at a glance

that for his poor friend Luca there was no sort of hope.

"This is beyond all comparison," said Guidobaldo, taking the great oval dish up reverently in his hands. "Maestro Benedetto, I do felicitate you indeed that you should possess such a pupil. He will be a glory to our beloved Urbino."

"It is indeed most excellent work, my lord duke," said the master-potter, who was trembling with surprise and dared not show all the astonishment and emotion that he felt at the discovery of so exquisite a creation in his bottega. "It must be," he added, for he was a very honest man, "the work of one of the lads of Pesaro or Castel-Durante. I have no such craftsman in my workshop. It is beautiful exceedingly!"

"It is worth its weight in gold!" said the prince, sharing his emotion. "Look, gentlemen—look! Will not the fame of Urbino be borne beyond the Apennines and Alps?"

Thus summoned, the court and the citizens came to look, and averred that truly never in Urbino had they seen such painting on majolica.

"But whose is it?" said Guidobaldo, impatiently, casting his eyes over the gathered group in the background of apprentices and artists. "Maestro Benedetto, I pray you, the name of the artist; I pray you, quick!"

"It is marked number eleven, my lord," answered the master-potter. "Ho, you who reply to that number, stand out and give your name. My lord duke has chosen your work. Ho, there! do you hear me?"

But not one of the group moved. The young men

looked from one to another. Who was this nameless rival? There were but ten of themselves.

"Ho, there!" repeated Signor Benedetto, getting angry. "Cannot you find a tongue, I say? Who has wrought this work? Silence is but insolence to his highness and to me!"

Then the child Sanzio loosened his little hand from his father's hold, and went forward, and stood before the master-potter.

"I painted it," he said, with a pleased smile: "I, Raffaele."

Can you not fancy, without telling, the confusion, the wonder, the rapture, the incredulity, the questions, the wild ecstasy of praise, that followed on the discovery of the child artist? Only the presence of Guidobaldo kept it in anything like decent quietude, and even he, all duke though he was, felt his eyes wet and felt his heart swell; for he himself was childless, and for the joy that Giovanni Sanzio felt that day he would have given his patrimony and duchy.

He took a jewel hung on a gold chain from his own breast and threw it over Raffaele's shoulders.

"There is your first guerdon," he said: "you will have many, O wondrous child, who shall live when we are dust!"

Raffaele, who himself was all the while quite tranquil and unmoved, kissed the duke's hand with sweetest grace, then turned to his own father.

"It is true I have won my lord duke's prize?"

"Quite true, my angel!" said Giovanni Sanzio, with tremulous voice.

Raffaele looked up at Maestro Benedetto.

"Then I claim the hand of Pacifica!"

There was a smile on all the faces round, even on the darker countenances of the vanquished painters.

"Oh, would indeed you were of age to be my son by marriage, as you are the son of my heart!" murmured Signor Benedetto. "Dear and marvellous child, you are but jesting, I know. Tell me what it is indeed that you would have. I could deny you nothing; and truly it is you who are my master."

"I am your pupil," said Raffaele, with that pretty serious smile of his, his little fingers playing with the ducal jewel. "I could never have painted that majolica yonder had you not taught me the secrets and management of your colors. Now, dear maestro mine, and you, O my lord duke, do hear me! I by the terms of the contest have won the hand of Pacifica and the right of association with Messer Ronconi. I take these rights and I give them over to my dear friend Luca of Fano, because he is the honestest man in all the world, and does honor Signor Benedetto and love Pacifica as no other can do so well, and Pacifica loves him; and my lord duke will say that thus all will be well."

So with the grave innocent audacity of a child he spoke,—this seven-year-old painter who was greater than any there.

Signor Benedetto stood mute, sombre, agitated. Luca had sprung forward and dropped on one knee: he was as pale as ashes. Raffaele looked at him with a smile.

"My lord duke," he said, with his little gentle smile, "you have chosen my work; defend me in my rights."

"Listen to the voice of an angel, my good Ben

edetto; heaven speaks by him," said Guidobaldo, gravely, laying his hand on the arm of his master-potter.

Harsh Signor Benedetto burst into tears.

"I can refuse him nothing," he said, with a sob. "He will give such glory unto Urbino as never the world hath seen!"

"And call down this fair Pacifica whom Raffaele has won," said the sovereign of the duchy, "and I will give her myself as her dower as many gold pieces as we can cram into this famous vase. An honest youth who loves her and whom she loves,—what better can you do, Benedetto? Young man, rise up and be happy. An angel has descended on earth this day for you."

But Luca heard not: he was still kneeling at the feet of Raffaele, where the world has knelt ever since.

MELEAGRIS GALLOPAVO



MELEAGRIS GALLOPAVO.

A TURKEY stood on a wall and saw a drove of black and gray pigs go by on the high-road underneath. The turkey was a very handsome gobbler, and his plumage was of the most brilliant gray and white, and his wattles were of the red of the carnation or the rose. He was very proud, and as he looked down on the pigs he stuck up his tail peacock-wise and fanned the air with it, and strutted up and down on the stone ledge, and said to himself, "What poor, dusty, hard-driven drudges those are in the road there! And not a single feather upon them! Nothing to cover their bodies except a few dingy-looking hairs! And they can only make an odd snuffling noise instead of gobbling! What a contemptible grunting and grumbling! And then what a tail!—a wisp of rope would be better!"

Then he spread his own tail higher and higher and broader and broader, just to show the pigs what a tail could be; and he gobbled loudly, that they might know what intelligible and melodious speech was like.

The poor pigs went snuffling and shuffling along in the mud and stones beneath the wall, and were driven into the straw-yard of the turkey's own farmhouse.

Next morning, lo! the turkey was put in a coop

and was carried off to market, with a number of ducks and geese and cackling pullets, and who should be next to him but a poor gray pig, with his heels tied together so that he could not stir.

"What a wretched creature!" said the turkey in its pride, for the coop had not taken down its vanity one peg. "What a sorry animal! and such a tail! Of course they are going to cut his throat. As for me, this is a throne: I suppose I am going to the palace. Perhaps the queen has never seen a beautiful turkey before."

Then he began again to spread out his tail-plume and shake his rosy wattles, and began to gobble, gobble, gobble with all his might. But the cart gave a lurch and the coop tilted on one side, and the turkey tilted up with it and lost his balance.

"Dear me! what a price one pays for being of high rank in this world!" he said to himself, as he clung to the side of the wicker-work and tried to preserve his dignity.

The poultry were all in flat baskets, and so were the geese and the ducks.

"He'll be fine for killing three months hence, ma'am!" his driver was saying, as he stopped the cart and held up the coop to show our gentleman to a woman who stood on the curbstone.

"For killing!" echoed the turkey; and he swooned away, and fell in a heap of ruffled feathers on the bottom of the wicker-work prison.

For death had never occurred to him as a possible fate for himself, though he saw other creatures go daily to martyrdom.

"You will be sooner or later killed, just as I shall be," said the pig, with a grunt, as the turkey came to itself. "What do you suppose they fatten you for? For love of you? Ough! you silly vain thing!"

"I thought it was because—because—because I am a turkey!" sighed the poor prisoner in the coop.

"Because you are a turkey!" echoed the pig. "As if there were not five hundred thousand turkeys in the world! That is all. You will be before Christmas just as I shall be: a knife will slit your throat."

The poor turkey swooned again on hearing this, and did not recover so rapidly as before: therefore the cart had jolted on again and was standing in the market-place, with the horses out of the shafts, before he opened his eyes and regained his consciousness.

The master of the cart was away from it, and it had been unpacked of most of its contents, and the pig and the turkey were left alone.

Suddenly the pig gave a grunt, and the turkey started, for his nerves were on edge and the least thing frightened him.

"What a hideous voice you have!" he said, pettishly. "You should hear *me*!"

And he began to gobble with all his might.

"I don't see that your noise is a bit prettier than mine," said the pig. "But it is very silly to lose your time squabbling about voices. We could get out if you would help me a little."

The turkey was silent.

To get out would be delightful; but to go into partnership with piggy hurt his pride so much that he would not even ask in what way escape could be

accomplished. But the pig was in too much haste and too much in earnest to stand upon etiquette.

"I can get my snout to your coop," he said, eagerly; "and I will gnaw it asunder—it's nothing but wicker—if you will promise to peck my cords to pieces when you are out. Now, don't you see what I mean?"

The turkey was so enraptured that his pride all tumbled down like a broken egg, and his wings began to flap in a tremendous flurry.

"Make haste! make haste!" he cried, and gobbled till he was red in the face.

"Don't make such a noise, or they'll hear you," said the pig, getting his teeth well on to the wicker, "and then you and I shall go up as the alderman and his chains on to some horrid man's table."

"Alderman?" said the turkey.

"They call a roast turkey and its sausages so," explained the pig.

The turkey thought it very ghastly pleasantry.

The pig meanwhile was hard at work, and in a very little time he had gnawed, and pulled, and bitten, and twisted the coop on the side near to him in such an effectual manner that the turkey soon got his head through, and then his throat, and then his body. He gave a gobble of glory and joy.

"But undo me!" squeaked the pig.

Now, the turkey was in a fearful hurry to be gone; his heart beat and his wings flapped so that he almost fell into convulsions; but he was a bird of honor and good faith. He bent down and pecked with such frantic force at the knots tying the pig's legs that he filled his beak with frayed cord, and in less time than

I take to write it piggy tumbled in his heavy fashion off the cart on to the ground,—free.

“Now run,” said the pig; and nobody knows how fast a pig can run who has not seen him put his mind and his will into it. The turkey could not fly, because his wings were cut, and tame turkeys seldom know much about flying; but, what with a stride and a flutter mixed in one, he managed to cover the ground rapidly, and kept up side by side with the pig, who, for his part, knowing the country, kept steadily on down the road, which fortunately for them was a solitary one, and made straight for a wood which he saw in the distance. The wood was about a mile and a half off, and the two comrades were in sore distress when they came up to it; but they did reach it unstopped, and sank down on the grass under some larches with a sigh of content.

“Such a useless tree the larch!” murmured the pig; “not an acorn on it once in all its days!”

For, of course, the pig viewed all trees only in relation to acorns.

“I can’t eat acorns,” sighed the turkey, as soon as he got his breath.

“You ungrateful creature,” said the pig in reproof. “Be content that you have escaped with your life.”

“Are you *sure* we have escaped?”

“We have escaped for the time,” said the philosophic pig; “and to be loose in a wood is heaven upon earth. There must be grain, or berries, or something you can pick up, if only you will look about for it.”

Now it was easy for the good pig to be philosophic,

because near at hand he had smelt out a savory spot in the mossy ground, and he was right in the very middle of a hearty meal of truffles.

"I never thought to have to beg my bread," sighed the turkey.

"Who do you suppose would take the trouble to feed you if it was not to kill you?" grunted the pig, with his mouth quite full. "You need not *beg* your bread, as you call it; *look* for it,—as I do."

The turkey, pressed by hunger, did begin to look. A tame turkey, you know, knows nothing about feeding itself; food is thrown out to it; and our turkey, at any rate, had always supposed that was an ordination of Providence.

But little by little, watching the pig devouring the truffles, natural appetites and instincts awoke in him: no doubt his grandparents a hundred times removed had been wild turkeys by the borders of the Missouri or in the woods of Arkansas, and hereditary instincts revived in him under the all-potent prick of hunger. He did begin to look about, and spied a wild strawberry or two and ate them, and saw a blackberry-bush and stripped it, and, finding a big grasshopper and a small frog, found an appetite also for them.

"I never knew so much natural nourishment grew about one," he remarked to the pig, who snorted,—

"There is food enough; only men take it all. Your people are all in America, but men can't let them alone even there, so I have heard. Oh, there is a pretty hen-pheasant! Good-morning, Madame Phasiani."

"Is that her name?" asked the turkey.

"It is her family name; and your own is Meleagris

Gallopavo, and I don't suppose you knew that," said the pig, very snappishly.

The turkey was silent. Meleagris Gallopavo! That really was a very fine name!

"Is one well off in this wood, Madame Phasiani?" asked the pig of the pheasant, who sighed, and replied that the wood was very nice, and Indian corn was thrown out twice a day; but then when there was the trail of the beater over it all, who could be happy?

"There is the trail of the butcher over me," said the pig, "but I enjoy myself whilst I can. You mentioned Indian corn, madam: is the keeper's cottage unfortunately near us, then?"

She said it was half a mile off, or perhaps not so much.

"This is a preserve, then?" said the pig.

She sighed again, and said it was, and sauntered pensively away with her head on one side, as pheasants always do.

"I hoped it was a bit of wild coppice," said the pig. "Ah, here is a kingfisher. How do, Mr. Alced?"

But the kingfisher, who is the shyest creature upon earth, skimmed away in silence.

"Why do you call them all those fine names?" said the turkey.

"It costs nothing, and it pleases them," said the pig, curtly. "It is part of men's tomfoolery," he added, after a pause; and then, seeing a turtle-dove, he grunted in his most amiable fashion, "Sir Turtur Auritus, good-day. We are resting in your wood a little while; it is very cool, and green, and pleasant. May I ask if it be also *safe*?"

"Safe!" said the turtle-dove, sitting down on a cranberry-bough. "There are guns, guns, guns, from morning to night."

"Surely not this time of the year? No!"

"There are for us," said the turtle-dove, sorrowfully; "and when there are not guns there are traps. They have no mercy on us. We only eat the pine-kernels, the wood-spurge, grain, the little snails. We do no harm. Yet they hunt us down; they put poisoned colza for us; they kill us by thousands; and I have heard—though it seems too terrible to be true—that they pack us alive in hampers, keep us shut up one atop of another for days, then pull our tail-feathers out, and shut us up again in another box; when that box flies open they shoot at us, so I have heard."

"Oh, yes; my gentlemen call that their '*poules*,' and give each other prizes for doing it," said the pig, with a grim sympathy. "They think it vulgar when the lads at village fairs grease our tails and hunt us. Dear Sir Turtur Auritus, is there such a gigantic sham, such an unutterable beast anywhere as Man?"

"I should think there is not," said the turtle-dove. "Myself I live out of the world, on the top of that lime-tree you see there, and if I can only alight safely to feed and drink twice a day, I ask no more."

A pretty partridge went tripping by at that moment, with some finely-grown sons and daughters after her. She was a charming and lovely creature, only she had a sadly nervous manner.

"When it grows near the 1st of September," she said in a tone of apology to the pig, who saluted her as Lady Starnacineria, "every sound, the very slightest

sends my heart up into my mouth, and I take every stone for a dog. What is the use or the joy of bringing these dear children into a world of shot? Their doom is to be huddled alive into a game-bag, with broken limbs and torn bodies, and my lord will think himself a saint fit for heaven if he send a hamper of them up to a hospital."

"All men's hypocrisy, madam," said the pig. "I prefer the frank, blunt snap of the fox, who makes no pretence of Christian charity, but only wants his dinner."

"If it were only the fox," sighed the partridge, "that would be very bearable; and he likes a common hen quite as well as ourselves,—and better, because the poor vulgar creature is bigger."

With a sigh she devoted herself to laying open an ants' nest, and called to her young to devour the eggs in it.

"This seems a very nice home of yours," said the pig, to provoke conversation.

The partridge sighed as the pheasant had done.

"It is too charming among these turnips," she said, "and there is most excellent fare all over these fields; but, alas! for what a fate do I live and hatch these dear children—the gun, the dog, the bag! Ah, dear sir, life to a partridge, where man is, is only a vale of tears, though led in the best of corn-fields!"

And she said "Cheep, cheep," and made a restless little flutter of all her feathers, and crept under the rail again back among the turnips.

At that moment a fine black rabbit, with a white tuft for a tail, darted by too quick for the pig to stop him.

"Ah, he has a sad life,—almost as sad as mine!" said the turtle-dove. "He dwells in quite a humble way under ground, but they never let him alone. When they can shoot nothing else, they are forever banging and blazing at him. And they put a ferret through his hall door without even knocking to say they are there. Have you ever seen the poor bunnies sitting outside their warrens cleaning their faces like pussy-cats in the cool of the early morning! Ah, such a pretty sight! But men only want them for their pelts or to put them in a pie."

"What is your opinion of men, dear lady?" said the pig, as a red-and-white cow came and looked over the fence.

"Oh, don't mention them!" said the cow, with unfeigned horror. "Don't they massacre all my pretty children, and drive me to market with my udders bursting, and break my heart and brand my skin? and when I am grown old will they not knock me on the head, or run a knife through my spine, and turn me into a hundred uses, hide, and hoofs, and everything? it is all written in their children's lesson-books. 'The most useful animal in the kingdom of nature is a cow.' That is what they say. Ugh!"

"My dear friend," said the pig, turning to the turkey, "you see that every living thing is devoured by man. Why should you suppose you were to be the exception?"

"No one has such a tail as I have," said the turkey.

His fright over, he had come to the conclusion that

nobody would ever do anything except adore a being with such a tail as his.

"What is your tail compared with the peacock's?" said the pig, with scorn. "You are only so vain because you are so ignorant."

"Do they kill peacocks?" asked the turkey.

"No; I don't think they do," replied the pig, truthful, though truth demolished his theories, which is more than can be said for human philosophers.

"Then why do they keep them?" said the turkey.

"Because they have such wonderful tails," said the pig, incautiously.

"*There!*" said the turkey, triumphantly; and out he spread his own tail, making it into a very grand wheel, and crying with all his might in that peculiar voice which nature has given to turkeys, "I am Meleagris Gallopavo! I am Meleagris Gallopavo!"

He had never known his new name till five minutes previously; but that made no difference: he was just as vain of it as if he had borne it all his life. Ask the Herald's College if this be uncommon.

He had stretched his throat out, and his rosy wattles glowed like geraniums, and he turned slowly round and round so that every one might admire him, and he stuck his tail up on high as stiff and as straight as if it had been made of pasteboard.

"I am Meleagris Gallopavo!" he cried, with a very shrill shriek, and scattered the sandy soil of the wood all about him with his hind claws.

Crack! A bludgeon rolled him over, a mere ball of ruffled, crumpled feathers, on the ground, and a lurcher dog ran into him and gripped him tight and hard.

"We're in luck, mate!" said an ill-looking fellow who was prowling along the edge of the field with another as ill favored. "Mum's the word, and he'll go in the pot worth twenty rabbits. Who'd ha' thought of finding a darned turkey out on the spree?"

Then the cruel man rammed poor Meleagris Gallopavo into a bag that he carried with him. He was a village ne'er-do-weel, seeing if he could trespass with impunity and knock over a bunny or two on the sly, knowing that the keepers were away from that part of the wood that day. The pig lay hidden among the wood-spurge and the creeping moss, and looked so exactly like a log of grayish-brown timber that the ruffians never noticed him.

"I knew his tail would be the undoing of him!" he said, sorrowfully, as his poor friend was borne off dead in the poachers' sack.

He himself had never looked so complacently on his own gray hairless wisp as he did now. How convenient it was! Anybody would take it for a bit of dry grass or a twig.

I may as well add that the mistress of the wood came through it next day, and the pig followed her home, and ate an apple which she gave him so cannily that she sent him into her yard, and has kept him like a very prince of pigs ever since. But he is always sorry for his poor friend's fate; and he has never since told any turkey that its family name is Meleagris Gallopavo.

FINDELKIND



FINDELKIND.

THERE was a little boy, a year or two ago, who lived under the shadow of Martinswand. Most people know, I should suppose, that the Martinswand is that mountain in the Oberinnthal where, several centuries past, brave Kaiser Max lost his footing as he stalked the chamois, and fell upon a ledge of rock, and stayed there, in mortal peril, for thirty hours, till he was rescued by the strength and agility of a Tyrol hunter,—an angel in the guise of a hunter, as the chronicles of the time prefer to say.

The Martinswand is a grand mountain, being one of the spurs of the greater Sonnstein, and rises precipitously, looming, massive and lofty, like a very fortress for giants, where it stands right across that road which, if you follow it long enough, takes you through Zell to Landeck,—old, picturesque, poetic Landeck, where Frederick of the Empty Pockets rhymed his sorrows in ballads to his people,—and so on by Bludenz into Switzerland itself, by as noble a highway as any traveller can ever desire to traverse on a summer's day. It is within a mile of the little burg of Zell, where the people, in the time of their emperor's peril, came out with torches and bells, and the Host lifted up by their priest, and all prayed on their knees underneath the

steep gaunt pile of limestone, that is the same to-day as it was then whilst Kaiser Max is dust; it soars up on one side of this road, very steep and very majestic, having bare stone at its base, and being all along its summit crowned with pine woods; and on the other side of the road are a little stone church, quaint and low, and gray with age, and a stone farm-house, and cattle-sheds, and timber-sheds, all of wood that is darkly brown from time; and beyond these are some of the most beautiful meadows in the world, full of tall grass and countless flowers, with pools and little estuaries made by the brimming Inn River that flows by them; and beyond the river are the glaciers of the Sonnstein and the Selrain and the wild Arlberg region, and the golden glow of sunset in the west, most often seen from here through the veil of falling rain.

At this farm-house, with Martinswand towering above it, and Zell a mile beyond, there lived, and lives still, a little boy who bears the old historical name of Findelkind, whose father, Otto Korner, is the last of a sturdy race of yeomen, who had fought with Hofer and Haspinger, and had been free men always.

Findelkind came in the middle of seven other children, and was a pretty boy of nine years, with slenderer limbs and paler cheeks than his rosy brethren, and tender dreamy eyes that had the look, his mother told him, of seeking stars in mid-day: *de chercher midi à quatorze heures*, as the French have it. He was a good little lad, and seldom gave any trouble from disobedience, though he often gave it from forgetfulness. His father angrily complained that he was always in the clouds,—that is, he was always dreaming, and so very

often would spill the milk out of the pails, chop his own fingers instead of the wood, and stay watching the swallows when he was sent to draw water. His brothers and sisters were always making fun of him: they were sturdier, ruddier, and merrier children than he was, loved romping and climbing and nutting, thrashing the walnut-trees and sliding down snow-drifts, and got into mischief of a more common and childish sort than Findelkind's freaks of fancy. For indeed he was a very fanciful little boy: everything around had tongues for him; and he would sit for hours among the long rushes on the river's edge, trying to imagine what the wild green-gray water had found in its wanderings, and asking the water-rats and the ducks to tell him about it; but both rats and ducks were too busy to attend to an idle little boy, and never spoke: which vexed him.

Findelkind, however, was very fond of his books: he would study day and night, in his little ignorant, primitive fashion. He loved his missal and his primer, and could spell them both out very fairly, and was learning to write of a good priest in Zirl, where he trotted three times a week with his two little brothers. When not at school, he was chiefly set to guard the sheep and the cows, which occupation left him very much to himself; so that he had many hours in the summer-time to stare up to the skies and wonder—wonder—wonder about all sorts of things; while in the winter—the long, white, silent winter, when the post-wagons ceased to run, and the road into Switzerland was blocked, and the whole world seemed asleep, except for the roaring of the winds—Findelkind, who

still trotted over the snow to school in Zirl, would dream still, sitting on the wooden settle by the fire, when he came home again under Martinswand. For the worst—or the best—of it all was that he *was* Findelkind.

This is what was always haunting him. He was Findelkind; and to bear this name seemed to him to mark him out from all other children and to dedicate him to heaven. One day three years before, when he had been only six years old, the priest in Zirl, who was a very kindly and cheerful man, and amused the children as much as he taught them, had not allowed Findelkind to leave school to go home, because the storm of snow and wind was so violent, but had kept him until the worst should pass, with one or two other little lads who lived some way off, and had let the boys roast a meal of apples and chestnuts by the stove in his little room, and, while the wind howled and the blinding snow fell without, had told the children the story of another Findelkind,—an earlier Findelkind, who had lived in the flesh on Arlberg as far back as 1381, and had been a little shepherd-lad, “just like you,” said the good man, looking at the little boys munching their roast crabs, and whose country had been over there, above Stuben, where Danube and Rhine meet and part.

The pass of Arlberg is even still so bleak and bitter that few care to climb there; the mountains around are drear and barren, and snow lies till midsummer, and even longer sometimes. “But in the early ages,” said the priest (and this is quite a true tale that the children heard with open eyes, and mouths only not open be-

cause they were full of crabs and chestnuts), "in the early ages," said the priest to them, "the Arlberg was far more dreary than it is now. There was only a mule-track over it, and no refuge for man or beast; so that wanderers and peddlers, and those whose need for work or desire for battle brought them over that frightful pass, perished in great numbers, and were eaten by the bears and the wolves. The little shepherd-boy Findelkind—who was a little boy five hundred years ago, remember," the priest repeated,—“was sorely disturbed and distressed to see these poor dead souls in the snow winter after winter, and seeing the blanched bones lie on the bare earth, unburied, when summer melted the snow. It made him unhappy, very unhappy; and what could he do, he a little boy keeping sheep? He had as his wages two florins a year; that was all; but his heart rose high, and he had faith in God. Little as he was, he said to himself, he would try and do something, so that year after year those poor lost travellers and beasts should not perish so. He said nothing to anybody, but he took the few florins he had saved up, bade his master farewell, and went on his way begging,—a little fourteenth-century boy, with long, straight hair, and a girdled tunic, as you see them,” continued the priest, “in the miniatures in the black-letter missal that lies upon my desk. No doubt heaven favored him very strongly, and the saints watched over him; still, without the boldness of his own courage and the faith in his own heart they would not have done so. I suppose, too, that when knights in their armor, and soldiers in their camps, saw such a little fellow all alone, they helped

him, and perhaps struck some blows for him, and so sped him on his way, and protected him from robbers and from wild beasts. Still, be sure that the real shield and the real reward that served Findelkind of Arlberg was the pure and noble purpose that aimed him night and day. Now, history does not tell us where Findelkind went, nor how he fared, nor how long he was about it; but history does tell us that the little barefooted, long-haired boy, knocking so loudly at castle gates and city walls in the name of Christ and Christ's poor brethren, did so well succeed in his quest that before long he had returned to his mountain-home with means to have a church and a rude dwelling built, where he lived with six other brave and charitable souls, dedicating themselves to St. Christopher, and going out night and day to the sound of the Angelus, seeking the lost and weary. This is really what Findelkind of Arlberg did five centuries ago, and did so quickly that his fraternity of St. Christopher twenty years after numbered among its members archdukes, and prelates, and knights without number, and lasted as a great order down to the days of Joseph II. This is what Findelkind in the fourteenth century did, I tell you. Bear like faith in your hearts, my children; and though your generation is a harder one than this, because it is without faith, yet you shall move mountains, because Christ and St. Christopher will be with you."

Then the good man, having said that, blessed them, and left them alone to their chestnuts and crabs, and went into his own oratory to prayer. The other boys laughed and chattered; but Findelkind sat very quietly,

thinking of his namesake, all the day after, and for many days and weeks and months this story haunted him. A little boy had done all that; and this little boy had been called Findelkind: Findelkind, just like himself.

It was beautiful, and yet it tortured him. If the good man had known how the history would root itself in the child's mind, perhaps he would never have told it; for night and day it vexed Findelkind, and yet seemed beckoning to him and crying, "Go thou and do likewise!"

But what could he do?

There was the snow, indeed, and there were the mountains, as in the fourteenth century, but there were no travellers lost. The diligence did not go into Switzerland after autumn, and the country-people who went by on their mules and in their sledges to Innspruck knew their way very well, and were never likely to be adrift on a winter's night, or eaten by a wolf or a bear.

When spring came, Findelkind sat by the edge of the bright pure water among the flowering grasses, and felt his heart heavy. Findelkind of Arlberg who was in heaven now must look down, he fancied, and think him so stupid and so selfish, sitting there. The first Findelkind, a few centuries before, had trotted down on his bare feet from his mountain-pass, and taken his little crook, and gone out boldly over all the land on his pilgrimage, and knocked at castle gates and city walls in Christ's name and for love of the poor! That was to do something indeed!

This poor little living Findelkind would look at the

miniatures in the priest's missal, in one of which there was the little fourteenth-century boy with long hanging hair and a wallet and bare feet, and he never doubted that it was the portrait of the blessed Findelkind who was in heaven; and he wondered if he looked like a little boy there, or if he were changed to the likeness of an angel.

"He was a boy just like me," thought the poor little fellow, and he felt so ashamed of himself,—so very ashamed; and the priest had told him to try and do the same. He brooded over it so much, and it made him so anxious and so vexed, that his brothers ate his porridge and he did not notice it, his sisters pulled his curls and he did not feel it, his father brought a stick down on his back and he only started and stared, and his mother cried because he was losing his mind and would grow daft, and even his mother's tears he scarcely saw. He was always thinking of Findelkind in heaven.

When he went for water, he spilt one-half; when he did his lessons, he forgot the chief part; when he drove out the cow, he let her munch the cabbages; and when he was set to watch the oven he let the loaves burn, like great Alfred. He was always busied thinking, "Little Findelkind that is in heaven did so great a thing: why may not I? I ought! I ought!" What was the use of being named after Findelkind that was in heaven, unless one did something great too?

Next to the church there is a little stone lodge, or shed, with two arched openings, and from it you look into the tiny church with its crucifixes and relics, or out to great, bold, sombre Martinswand, as you like

best; and in this spot Findelkind would sit hour after hour, while his brothers and sisters were playing, and look up at the mountains or on to the altar, and wish and pray and vex his little soul most wofully; and his ewes and his lambs would crop the grass about the entrance, and bleat to make him notice them and lead them farther afeld, but all in vain. Even his dear sheep he hardly heeded, and his pet ewes, Katte and Greta, and the big ram Zips, rubbed their soft noses in his hand unnoticed. So the summer droned away,—the summer that is so short in the mountains, and yet so green and so radiant, with the torrents tumbling through the flowers, and the hay tossing in the meadows, and the lads and lasses climbing to cut the rich sweet grass of the alps. The short summer passed as fast as a dragon-fly flashes by, all green and gold, in the sun; and it was near winter once more, and still Findelkind was always dreaming and wondering what he could do for the good of St. Christopher; and the longing to do it all came more and more into his little heart, and he puzzled his brain till his head ached. One autumn morning, whilst yet it was dark, Findelkind made his mind up, and rose before his brothers, and stole downstairs and out into the air, as it was easy to do, because the house-door never was bolted. He had nothing with him; he was barefooted, and his school-satchel was slung behind him, as Findelkind of Arlberg's wallet had been five centuries before.

He took a little staff from the piles of wood lying about, and went out on to the high-road, on his way to do heaven's will. He was not very sure what that divine will wished, but that was because he was only

nine years old, and not very wise; but Findelkind that was in heaven had begged for the poor; so would he.

His parents were very poor, but he did not think of them as in any want at any time, because he always had his bowlful of porridge and as much bread as he wanted to eat. This morning he had nothing to eat; he wished to be away before any one could question him.

It was quite dusk in the fresh autumn morning: the sun had not risen behind the glaciers of the Stubaithal, and the road was scarcely seen; but he knew it very well, and he set out bravely, saying his prayers to Christ, and to St. Christopher, and to Findelkind that was in heaven.

He was not in any way clear as to what he would do, but he thought he would find some great thing to do somewhere, lying like a jewel in the dust; and he went on his way in faith, as Findelkind of Arlberg had done before him.

His heart beat high, and his head lost its aching pains, and his feet felt light; so light as if there were wings to his ankles. He would not go to Zirl, because Zirl he knew so well, and there could be nothing very wonderful waiting there; and he ran fast the other way. When he was fairly out from under the shadow of Martinswand, he slackened his pace, and saw the sun come on his path, and the red day redden the gray-green water, and the early Stellwagen from Landeck, that had been lumbering along all the night, overtook him.

He would have run after it, and called out to the travellers for alms, but he felt ashamed: his father

had never let him beg, and he did not know how to begin.

The Stellwagen rolled on through the autumn mud, and that was one chance lost. He was sure that the first Findelkind had not felt ashamed when he had knocked at the first castle gates.

By and by, when he could not see Martinswand by turning his head back ever so, he came to an inn that used to be a post-house in the old days when men travelled only by road. A woman was feeding chickens in the bright clear red of the cold daybreak.

Findelkind timidly held out his hand. "For the poor!" he murmured, and doffed his cap.

The old woman looked at him sharply. "Oh, is it you, little Findelkind? Have you run off from school? Be off with you home! I have mouths enough to feed here."

Findelkind went away, and began to learn that it is not easy to be a prophet or a hero in one's own country.

He trotted a mile farther, and met nothing. At last he came to some cows by the wayside, and a man tending them.

"Would you give me something to help make a monastery?" he said, timidly, and once more took off his cap. The man gave a great laugh. "A fine monk, you! And who wants more of these lazy drones? Not I."

Findelkind never answered: he remembered the priest had said that the years he lived in were very hard ones, and men in them had no faith.

Ere long he came to a big walled house, with turrets

and grated casements,—very big it looked to him,—like one of the first Findelkind's own castles. His heart beat loud against his side, but he plucked up his courage, and knocked as loud as his heart was beating.

He knocked and knocked, but no answer came. The house was empty. But he did not know that; he thought it was that the people within were cruel, and he went sadly onward with the road winding before him, and on his right the beautiful impetuous gray river, and on his left the green Mittelgebirge and the mountains that rose behind it. By this time the day was up; the sun was glowing on the red of the cranberry shrubs and the blue of the bilberry-boughs: he was hungry and thirsty and tired. But he did not give in for that; he held on steadily; he knew that there was near, somewhere near, a great city that the people called Sprugg, and thither he had resolved to go. By noontide he had walked eight miles, and came to a green place where men were shooting at targets, the tall thick grass all around them: and a little way farther off was a train of people chanting and bearing crosses and dressed in long flowing robes.

The place was the Hottinger Au, and the day was Saturday, and the village was making ready to perform a miracle-play on the morrow.

Findelkind ran to the robed singing-folk, quite sure that he saw the people of God. "Oh, take me, take me!" he cried to them; "do take me with you to do heaven's work."

But they pushed him aside for a crazy little boy that spoiled their rehearsing.

"It is only for Hotting folk," said a lad older than

himself. "Get out of the way with you, *Liebchen*." And the man who carried the cross knocked him with force on the head, by mere accident; but Findelkind thought he had meant it.

Were people so much kinder five centuries before, he wondered, and felt sad as the many-colored robes swept on through the grass, and the crack of the rifles sounded sharply through the music of the chanting voices. He went on, foot-sore and sorrowful, thinking of the castle doors that had opened, and the city gates that had unclosed, at the summons of the little long-haired boy whose figure was painted on the missal.

He had come now to where the houses were much more numerous, though under the shade of great trees, —lovely old gray houses, some of wood, some of stone, some with frescos on them and gold and color and mottoes, some with deep barred casements, and carved portals, and sculptured figures; houses of the poorer people now, but still memorials of a grand and gracious time. For he had wandered into the quarter of St. Nicholas in this fair mountain-city, which he, like his country-folk, called Sprugg, though the government calls it Innsbruck.

He got out upon a long gray wooden bridge, and looked up and down the reaches of the river, and thought to himself, maybe this was not Sprugg but Jerusalem, so beautiful it looked with its domes shining golden in the sun, and the snow of the Soldstein and Branjöch behind them. For little Findelkind had never come so far as this before. As he stood on the bridge so dreaming, a hand clutched him, and a voice said,—

"A whole kreutzer, or you do not pass!"

Findelkind started and trembled.

A kreutzer! he had never owned such a treasure in all his life.

"I have no money!" he murmured, timidly, "I came to see if I could get money for the poor."

The keeper of the bridge laughed.

"You are a little beggar, you mean? Oh, very well! Then over my bridge you do not go."

"But it is the city on the other side?"

"To be sure it is the city; but over nobody goes without a kreutzer."

"I never have such a thing of my own! never! never!" said Findelkind, ready to cry.

"Then you were a little fool to come away from your home, wherever that may be," said the man at the bridge-head. "Well, I will let you go, for you look a baby. But do not beg; that is bad."

"Findelkind did it!"

"Then Findelkind was a rogue and a vagabond," said the taker of tolls.

"Oh, no—no—no!"

"Oh, yes—yes—yes, little sauce-box; and take that," said the man, giving him a box on the ear, being angry at contradiction.

Findelkind's head drooped, and he went slowly over the bridge, forgetting that he ought to have thanked the toll-taker for a free passage. The world seemed to him very difficult. How had Findelkind done when he had come to bridges?—and, oh, how had Findelkind done when he had been hungry?

For this poor little Findelkind was getting very

hungry, and his stomach was as empty as was his wallet.

A few steps brought him to the Goldenes Dachl.

He forgot his hunger and his pain, seeing the sun shine on all that gold, and the curious painted galleries under it. He thought it was real solid gold. Real gold laid out on a house-roof,—and the people all so poor! Findelkind began to muse, and wonder why everybody did not climb up there and take a tile off and be rich? But perhaps it would be wicked. Perhaps God put the roof there with all that gold to prove people. Findelkind got bewildered.

If God did such a thing, was it kind?

His head seemed to swim, and the sunshine went round and round with him. There went by him, just then, a very venerable-looking old man with silver hair: he was wrapped in a long cloak. Findelkind pulled at the coat gently, and the old man looked down.

"What is it, my boy?" he asked.

Findelkind answered, "I came out to get gold: may I take it off that roof?"

"It is not gold, child, it is gilding."

"What is gilding?"

"It is a thing made to look like gold: that is all."

"It is a lie, then!"

The old man smiled. "Well, nobody thinks so. If you like to put it so, perhaps it is. What do you want gold for, you wee thing?"

"To build a monastery and house the poor."

The old man's face scowled and grew dark, for he was a Lutheran pastor from Bavaria.

"Who taught you such trash?" he said, crossly.

"It is not trash. It is faith."

And Findelkind's face began to burn and his blue eyes to darken and moisten. There was a little crowd beginning to gather, and the crowd was beginning to laugh. There were many soldiers and rifle-shooters in the throng, and they jeered and joked, and made fun of the old man in the long cloak, who grew angry then with the child. "You are a little idolater and a little impudent sinner!" he said, wrathfully, and shook the boy by the shoulder, and went away, and the throng that had gathered round had only poor Findelkind left to tease.

He was a very poor little boy indeed to look at, with his sheepskin tunic, and his bare feet and legs, and his wallet that never was to get filled.

"Where do you come from, and what do you want?" they asked; and he answered, with a sob in his voice,—

"I want to do like Findelkind of Arlberg."

And then the crowd laughed, not knowing at all what he meant, but laughing just because they did not know: as crowds always will do. And only the big dogs that are so very big in this country, and are all loose, and free, and good-natured citizens, came up to him kindly, and rubbed against him, and made friends; and at that tears came into his eyes, and his courage rose, and he lifted his head.

"You are cruel people to laugh," he said, indignantly: "the dogs are kinder. People did not laugh at Findelkind. He was a little boy just like me, no better and no bigger, and as poor; and yet he had so much faith, and the world then was so good, that he

left his sheep and got money enough to build a church and a hospice to Christ and St. Christopher. And I want to do the same for the poor. Not for myself, no; for the poor! I am Fīndelkind too, and Fīndelkind of Arlberg that is in heaven speaks to me."

Then he stopped, and a sob rose again in his throat.

"He is crazy!" said the people, laughing, yet a little scared; for the priest at Zirl had said rightly, this is not an age of faith. At that moment there sounded, coming from the barracks, that used to be the Schloss in the old days of Kaiser Max and Mary of Burgundy, the sound of drums and trumpets and the tramp of marching feet. It was one of the corps of Jägers of Tyrol, going down from the avenue to the Rudolfplatz, with their band before them and their pennons streaming. It was a familiar sight, but it drew the street-throngs to it like magic: the age is not fond of dreamers, but it is very fond of drums. In almost a moment the old dark arcades and the river-side and the passages near were all empty, except for the women sitting at their stalls of fruit or cakes, or toys. They are wonderful old arched arcades, like the cloisters of a cathedral more than anything else, and the shops under them are all homely and simple,—shops of leather, of furs, of clothes, of wooden playthings, of sweet and wholesome bread. They are very quaint, and kept by poor folks for poor folks; but to the dazed eyes of Fīndelkind they looked like a forbidden paradise, for he was so hungry and so heart-broken, and he had never seen any bigger place than little Zirl.

He stood and looked wistfully, but no one offered him anything. Close by was a stall of splendid purple

grapes, but the old woman that kept it was busy knitting. She only called to him to stand out of her light.

"You look a poor brat: have you a home?" said another woman, who sold bridles and whips and horses' bells, and the like.

"Oh, yes, I have a home,—by Martinswand," said Findelkind, with a sigh.

The woman looked at him sharply. "Your parents have sent you on an errand here?"

"No; I have run away."

"Run away? Oh, you bad boy!—unless, indeed,—are they cruel to you?"

"No; very good."

"Are you a little rogue, then, or a thief?"

"You are a bad woman to think such things," said Findelkind, hotly, knowing himself on how innocent and sacred a quest he was.

"Bad? I? Oh ho!" said the old dame, cracking one of her new whips in the air, "I should like to make you jump about with this, you thankless little vagabond. Be off!"

Findelkind sighed again, his momentary anger passing; for he had been born with a gentle temper, and thought himself to blame much more readily than he thought other people were,—as, indeed, every wise child does, only there are so few children—or men—that are wise.

He turned his head away from the temptation of the bread and fruit-stalls, for in truth hunger gnawed him terribly, and wandered a little to the left. From where he stood he could see the long, beautiful street of Teresa, with its oriels and arches, painted windows and gilded

signs, and the steep, gray, dark mountains closing it in at the distance; but the street frightened him, it looked so grand, and he knew it would tempt him: so he went where he saw the green tops of some high elms and beeches. The trees, like the dogs, seemed like friends. It was the human creatures that were cruel.

At that moment there came out of the barrack gates, with great noise of trumpets and trampling of horses, a group of riders in gorgeous uniforms, with sabres and chains glancing and plumes tossing. It looked to Findelkind like a group of knights,—those knights who had helped and defended his namesake with their steel and their gold in the old days of the Arlberg quest. His heart gave a great leap, and he jumped on the dust for joy, and he ran forward and fell on his knees and waved his cap like a little mad thing, and cried out,—

“Oh, dear knights! oh, great soldiers! help me! Fight for me, for the love of the saints! I have come all the way from Martinswand, and I am Findelkind, and I am trying to serve St. Christopher like Findelkind of Arlberg.”

But his little swaying body and pleading hands and shouting voice and blowing curls frightened the horses: one of them swerved and very nearly settled the woes of Findelkind forever and aye by a kick. The soldier who rode the horse reined him in with difficulty: he was at the head of the little staff, being indeed no less or more than the general commanding the garrison, which in this city is some fifteen thousand strong. An orderly sprang from his saddle and seized the child, and shook him, and swore at him. Findelkind was frightened; but he shut his eyes and set his teeth, and

said to himself that the martyrs must have had very much worse than these things to suffer in their pilgrimage. He had fancied these riders were knights,—such knights as the priest had shown him the likeness of in old picture-books, whose mission it had been to ride through the world succoring the weak and weary, and always defending the right.

“What are your swords for, if you are not knights?” he cried, desperately struggling in his captor’s grip, and seeing through his half-closed lids the sunshine shining on steel scabbards.

“What does he want?” asked the officer in command of the garrison, whose staff all this bright and martial array was. He was riding out from the barracks to an inspection on the Rudolfplatz. He was a young man, and had little children himself, and was half amused, half touched, to see the tiny figure of the little dusty boy.

“I want to build a monastery, like Findelkind of Arlberg, and to help the poor,” said our Findelkind, valorously, though his heart was beating like that of a little mouse caught in a trap; for the horses were trampling up the dust around him, and the orderly’s grip was hard.

The officers laughed aloud; and indeed he looked a poor little scrap of a figure, very ill able to help even himself.

“Why do you laugh?” cried Findelkind, losing his terror in his indignation, and inspired with the courage which a great earnestness always gives. “You should not laugh. If you were true knights, you would not laugh: you would fight for me. I am little, I know.

—I am very little,—but he was no bigger than I; and see what great things he did. But the soldiers were good in those days; they did not laugh and use bad words——”

And Findelkind, on whose shoulder the orderly's hold was still fast, faced the horses, which looked to him as huge as Martinswand, and the swords, which he little doubted were to be sheathed in his heart.

The officers stared, laughed again, then whispered together, and Findelkind heard them say the word “crazed.” Findelkind, whose quick little ears were both strained like a mountain leveret's, understood that the great men were saying among themselves that it was not safe for him to be about alone, and that it would be kinder to him to catch and cage him,—the general view with which the world regards enthusiasts.

He heard, he understood; he knew that they did not mean to help him, these men with the steel weapons and the huge steeds, but that they meant to shut him up in a prison; he, little free-born, forest-fed Findelkind. He wrenched himself out of the soldier's grip, as the rabbit wrenches itself out of the jaws of the trap even at the cost of leaving a limb behind, shot between the horses' legs, doubled like a hunted thing, and spied a refuge. Opposite the avenue of gigantic poplars and pleasant stretches of grass shaded by other bigger trees, there stands a very famous church, famous alike in the annals of history and of art,—the church of the Franciscans, that holds the tomb of Kaiser Max, though, alas! it holds not his ashes, as his dying desire was that it should. The church stands here, a

noble, sombre place, with the Silver Chapel of Philipina Wessler adjoining it, and in front the fresh cool avenues that lead to the river and the broad water-meadows and the grand Hall road bordered with the painted stations of the Cross.

There were some peasants coming in from the country driving cows, and some burghers in their carts, with fat, slow horses; some little children were at play under the poplars and the elms; great dogs were lying about on the grass; everything was happy and at peace, except the poor throbbing heart of little Findelkind, who thought the soldiers were coming after him to lock him up as mad, and ran and ran as fast as his trembling legs would carry him, making for sanctuary, as, in the old bygone days that he loved, many a soul less innocent than his had done. The wide doors of the Hofkirche stood open, and on the steps lay a black-and-tan hound, watching no doubt for its master or mistress, who had gone within to pray. Findelkind, in his terror, vaulted over the dog, and into the church tumbled headlong.

It seemed quite dark, after the brilliant sunshine on the river and the grass; his forehead touched the stone floor as he fell, and as he raised himself and stumbled forward, reverent and bareheaded, looking for the altar to cling to when the soldiers should enter to seize him, his uplifted eyes fell on the great Tomb.

The tomb seems entirely to fill the church, as, with its twenty-four guardian figures round it, it towers up in the twilight that reigns here even at mid-day. There are a stern majesty and grandeur in it which dwarf every other monument and mausoleum. It is

grim, it is rude, it is savage, with the spirit of the rough ages that created it; but it is great with their greatness, it is heroic with their heroism, it is simple with their simplicity.

As the awe-stricken eyes of the terrified child fell on the mass of stone and bronze, the sight smote him breathless. The mailed warriors standing around it, so motionless, so solemn, filled him with a frozen nameless fear. He had never a doubt that they were the dead arisen. The foremost that met his eyes were Theodoric and Arthur; the next, grim Rudolf, father of a dynasty of emperors. There, leaning on their swords, the three gazed down on him, armored, armed, majestic, serious, guarding the empty grave, which to the child, who knew nothing of its history, seemed a bier; and at the feet of Theodoric, who alone of them all looked young and merciful, poor little desperate Findelkind fell with a piteous sob, and cried, "I am not mad! Indeed, indeed, I am not mad!"

He did not know that these grand figures were but statues of bronze. He was quite sure they were the dead, arisen, and meeting there, around that tomb on which the solitary kneeling knight watched and prayed, encircled, as by a wall of steel, by these his comrades. He was not frightened, he was rather comforted and stilled, as with a sudden sense of some deep calm and certain help.

Findelkind, without knowing that he was like so many dissatisfied poets and artists much bigger than himself, dimly felt in his little tired mind how beautiful and how gorgeous and how grand the world must

have been when heroes and knights like these had gone by in its daily sunshine and its twilight storms. No wonder Findelkind of Arlberg had found his pilgrimage so fair, when if he had needed any help he had only had to kneel and clasp these firm, mailed limbs, these strong cross-hilted swords, in the name of Christ and of the poor.

Theodoric seemed to look down on him with benignant eyes from under the raised visor; and our poor Findelkind, weeping, threw his small arms closer and closer round the bronze knees of the heroic figure, and sobbed aloud, "Help me, help me! Oh, turn the hearts of the people to me, and help me to do good!"

But Theodoric answered nothing.

There was no sound in the dark, hushed church; the gloom grew darker over Findelkind's eyes; the mighty forms of monarchs and of heroes grew dim before his sight. He lost consciousness, and fell prone upon the stones at Theodoric's feet; for he had fainted from hunger and emotion.

When he awoke it was quite evening; there was a lantern held over his head; voices were muttering curiously and angrily; bending over him were two priests, a sacristan of the church, and his own father. His little wallet lay by him on the stones, always empty.

"Boy of mine! were you mad?" cried his father, half in rage, half in tenderness. "The chase you have led me!—and your mother thinking you were drowned!—and all the working day lost, running after old women's tales of where they had seen you! Oh, little

fool, little fool! what was amiss with Martinswand, that you must leave it?"

Findelkind slowly and feebly rose, and sat up on the pavement, and looked up, not at his father, but at the knight Theodoric.

"I thought they would help me to keep the poor," he muttered, feebly, as he glanced at his own wallet. "And it is empty,—empty."

"Are we not poor enough?" cried his father, with natural impatience, ready to tear his hair with vexation at having such a little idiot for a son. "Must you rove afield to find poverty to help, when it sits cold enough, the Lord knows, at our own hearth? Oh, little ass, little dolt, little maniac, fit only for a mad-house, talking to iron figures and taking them for real men! What have I done, O heaven, that I should be afflicted thus?"

And the poor man wept, being a good affectionate soul, but not very wise, and believing that his boy was mad. Then, seized with sudden rage once more, at thought of his day all wasted, and its hours harassed and miserable through searching for the lost child, he plucked up the light, slight figure of Findelkind in his own arms, and, with muttered thanks and excuses to the sacristan of the church, bore the boy out with him into the evening air, and lifted him into a cart which stood there with a horse harnessed to one side of the pole, as the country-people love to do, to the risk of their own lives and their neighbors'. Findelkind said never a word; he was as dumb as Theodoric had been to him; he felt stupid, heavy, half blind; his father pushed him some bread, and he ate it by

sheer instinct, as a lost animal will do; the cart jogged on, the stars shone, the great church vanished in the gloom of night.

As they went through the city towards the river-side along the homeward way, never a word did his father, who was a silent man at all times, address to him. Only once, as they jogged over the bridge, he spoke.

"Son," he asked, "did you run away truly thinking to please God and help the poor?"

"Truly I did!" answered Findelkind, with a sob in his throat.

"Then thou wert an ass!" said his father. "Didst never think of thy mother's love and of my toil? Look at home."

Findelkind was mute. The drive was very long, backward by the same way, with the river shining in the moonlight and the mountains half covered with the clouds.

It was ten by the bells of Zirl when they came once more under the solemn shadow of grave Martinswand. There were lights moving about his house, his brothers and sisters were still up, his mother ran out into the road, weeping and laughing with fear and joy.

Findelkind himself said nothing.

He hung his head.

They were too fond of him to scold him or to jeer at him; they made him go quickly to his bed, and his mother made him a warm milk posset and kissed him.

"We will punish thee to-morrow, naughty and cruel one," said his parent. "But thou art punished enough already, for in thy place little Stefan had the sheep,

and he has lost Katte's lambs,—the beautiful twin lambs! I dare not tell thy father to-night. Dost hear the poor thing mourn? Do not go afield for thy duty again."

A pang went through the heart of Findelkind, as if a knife had pierced it. He loved Katte better than almost any other living thing, and she was bleating under his window childless and alone. They were such beautiful lambs, too!—lambs that his father had promised should never be killed, but be reared to swell the flock.

Findelkind cowered down in his bed, and felt wretched beyond all wretchedness. He had been brought back; his wallet was empty; and Katte's lambs were lost. He could not sleep.

His pulses were beating like so many steam-hammers; he felt as if his body were all one great throbbing heart. His brothers, who lay in the same chamber with him, were sound asleep; very soon his father and mother snored also, on the other side of the wall. Findelkind was alone wide awake, watching the big white moon sail past his little casement, and hearing Katte bleat.

Where were her poor twin lambs?

The night was bitterly cold, for it was already far on in autumn; the rivers had swollen and flooded many fields, the snow for the last week had fallen quite low down on the mountain-sides.

Even if still living, the little lambs would die, out on such a night without the mother or food and shelter of any sort. Findelkind, whose vivid brain always saw everything that he imagined as if it were being acted

before his eyes, in fancy saw his two dear lambs floating dead down the swollen tide, entangled in rushes on the flooded shore, or fallen with broken limbs upon a crest of rocks. He saw them so plainly that scarcely could he hold back his breath from screaming aloud in the still night and answering the mourning wail of the desolate mother.

At last he could bear it no longer: his head burned, and his brain seemed whirling round; at a bound he leaped out of bed quite noiselessly, slid into his sheepskins, and stole out as he had done the night before, hardly knowing what he did. Poor Katte was mourning in the wooden shed with the other sheep, and the wail of her sorrow sounded sadly across the loud roar of the rushing river.

The moon was still high.

Above, against the sky, black and awful with clouds floating over its summit, was the great Martinswand.

Findelkind this time called the big dog Waldmar to him, and with the dog beside him went once more out into the cold and the gloom, whilst his father and mother, his brothers and sisters, were sleeping, and poor childless Katte alone was awake.

He looked up at the mountain and then across the water-swept meadows to the river. He was in doubt which way to take. Then he thought that in all likelihood the lambs would have been seen if they had wandered the river way, and even little Stefan would have had too much sense to let them go there. So he crossed the road and began to climb Martinswand.

With the instinct of the born mountaineer, he had brought out his crampons with him, and had now fas-

tened them on his feet; he knew every part and ridge of the mountains, and had more than once climbed over to that very spot where Kaiser Max had hung in peril of his life.

On second thoughts he bade Waldmar go back to the house. The dog was a clever mountaineer, too, but Findelkind did not wish to lead him into danger. "I have done the wrong, and I will bear the brunt," he said to himself; for he felt as if he had killed Katte's children, and the weight of the sin was like lead on his heart, and he would not kill good Waldmar too.

His little lantern did not show much light, and as he went higher upwards he lost sight of the moon. The cold was nothing to him, because the clear still air was that in which he had been reared; and the darkness he did not mind, because he was used to that also; but the weight of sorrow upon him he scarcely knew how to bear, and how to find two tiny lambs in this vast waste of silence and shadow would have puzzled and wearied older minds than his. Garibaldi and all his household, old soldiers tried and true, sought all night once upon Caprera in such a quest, in vain.

If he could only have awakened his brother Stefan to ask him which way they had gone! but then, to be sure, he remembered, Stefan must have told that to all those who had been looking for the lambs from sunset to nightfall. All alone he began the ascent.

Time and again, in the glad spring-time and the fresh summer weather, he had driven his flock upwards to eat the grass that grew in the clefts of the rocks and on the broad green alps. The sheep could not climb to the highest points; but the goats did, and he with

them. Time and again he had lain on his back in these uppermost heights, with the lower clouds behind him and the black wings of the birds and the crows almost touching his forehead, as he lay gazing up into the blue depth of the sky, and dreaming, dreaming, dreaming.

He would never dream any more now, he thought to himself. His dreams had cost Katte her lambs, and the world of the dead Findelkind was gone forever: gone were all the heroes and knights; gone all the faith and the force; gone every one who cared for the dear Christ and the poor in pain.

The bells of Zirl were ringing midnight. Findelkind heard, and wondered that only two hours had gone by since his mother had kissed him in his bed. It seemed to him as if long long nights had rolled away, and he had lived a hundred years.

He did not feel any fear of the dark calm night, lit now and then by silvery gleams of moon and stars. The mountain was his old familiar friend, and the ways of it had no more terror for him than these hills here used to have for the bold heart of Kaiser Max. Indeed, all he thought of was Katte,—Katte and the lambs. He knew the way that the sheep-tracks ran; the sheep could not climb so high as the goats; and he knew, too, that little Stefan could not climb so high as he. So he began his search low down upon Martinswand.

After midnight the cold increased; there were snow-clouds hanging near, and they opened over his head, and the soft snow came flying along. For himself he did not mind it, but alas for the lambs!—if it covered

them, now would he find them? And if they slept in it they were dead.

It was bleak and bare on the mountain-side, though there were still patches of grass such as the flocks liked, that had grown since the hay was cut. The frost of the night made the stone slippery, and even the irons gripped it with difficulty; and there was a strong wind rising like a giant's breath, and blowing his small horn lantern to and fro.

Now and then he quaked a little with fear,—not fear of the night or the mountains, but of strange spirits and dwarfs and goblins of ill repute, said to haunt Martinswand after nightfall. Old women had told him of such things, though the priest always said that they were only foolish tales, there being nothing on God's earth wicked save men and women who had not clean hearts and hands. Findelkind believed the priest; still, all alone on the side of the mountain, with the snow-flakes flying round him, he felt a nervous thrill that made him tremble and almost turn backward. Almost, but not quite; for he thought of Katte and the poor little lambs lost—and perhaps dead—through his fault.

The path went zigzag and was very steep; the Arolla pines swayed their boughs in his face; stones that lay in his path unseen in the gloom made him stumble. Now and then a large bird of the night flew by with a rushing sound; the air grew so cold that all Martinswand might have been turning to one huge glacier. All at once he heard through the stillness—for there is nothing so still as a mountain-side in snow—a little pitiful bleat. All his terrors vanished; all his mem-

ories of ghost-tales passed away ; his heart gave a leap of joy ; he was sure it was the cry of the lambs. He stopped to listen more surely. He was now many score of feet above the level of his home and of Zirl ; he was, as nearly as he could judge, half-way as high as where the cross in the cavern marks the spot of the Kaiser's peril. The little bleat sounded above him, and it was very feeble and faint.

Findelkind set his lantern down, braced himself up by drawing tighter his old leathern girdle, set his sheepskin cap firm on his forehead, and went towards the sound as far as he could judge that it might be. He was out of the woods now ; there were only a few straggling pines rooted here and there in a mass of loose-lying rock and slate ; so much he could tell by the light of the lantern, and the lambs, by the bleating, seemed still above him.

It does not, perhaps, seem very hard labor to hunt about by a dusky light upon a desolate mountain-side ; but when the snow is falling fast,—when the light is only a small circle, wavering, yellowish on the white,—when around is a wilderness of loose stones and yawning clefts,—when the air is ice and the hour is past midnight,—the task is not a light one for a man ; and Findelkind was a child, like that Findelkind that was in heaven.

Long, very long, was his search ; he grew hot and forgot all fear, except a spasm of terror lest his light should burn low and die out. The bleating had quite ceased now, and there was not even a sigh to guide him ; but he knew that near him the lambs must be, and he did not waver or despair.

He did not pray ; praying in the morning had been no use ; but he trusted in God, and he labored hard, toiling to and fro, seeking in every nook and behind each stone, and straining every muscle and nerve, till the sweat rolled in a briny dew off his forehead, and his curls dripped with wet. At last, with a scream of joy, he touched some soft close wool that gleamed white as the white snow. He knelt down on the ground, and peered behind the stone by the full light of his lantern ; there lay the little lambs,—two little brothers, twin brothers, huddled close together, asleep. Asleep ? He was sure they were asleep, for they were so silent and still.

He bowed over them, and kissed them, and laughed, and cried, and kissed them again. Then a sudden horror smote him ; they were so very still. There they lay, cuddled close, one on another, one little white head on each little white body,—drawn closer than ever together, to try and get warm.

He called to them ; he touched them ; then he caught them up in his arms, and kissed them again, and again, and again. Alas ! they were frozen and dead. Never again would they leap in the long green grass, and frisk with each other, and lie happy by Katte's side ; they had died calling for their mother, and in the long, cold, cruel night, only death had answered.

Findelkind did not weep, or scream, or tremble ; his heart seemed frozen, like the dead lambs.

It was he who had killed them.

He rose up and gathered them in his arms, and cuddled them in the skirts of his sheepskin tunic, and cast his staff away that he might carry them, and so, thus

burdened with their weight, set his face to the snow and the wind once more, and began his downward way.

Once a great sob shook him; that was all. Now he had no fear.

The night might have been noon-day, the snow-storm might have been summer, for aught that he knew or cared.

Long and weary was the way, and often he stumbled and had to rest; often the terrible sleep of the snow lay heavy on his eyelids, and he longed to lie down and be at rest, as the little brothers were; often it seemed to him that he would never reach home again. But he shook the lethargy off him and resisted the longing, and held on his way: he knew that his mother would mourn for him as Katte mourned for the lambs. At length, through all difficulty and danger, when his light had spent itself and his strength had wellnigh spent itself too, his feet touched the old high-road. There were flickering torches and many people, and loud cries around the church, as there had been four hundred years before, when the last sacrament had been said in the valley for the hunter-king in peril above.

His mother, being sleepless and anxious, had risen long before it was dawn, and had gone to the children's chamber, and had found the bed of Findelkind empty once more.

He came into the midst of the people with the two little lambs in his arms, and he heeded neither the outcries of neighbors nor the frenzied joy of his mother: his eyes looked straight before him, and his face was white like the snow.

"I killed them," he said, and then two great tears rolled down his cheeks and fell on the little cold bodies of the two little dead brothers.

Findelkind was very ill for many nights and many days after that.

Whenever he spoke in his fever he always said, "I killed them!"

Never anything else.

So the dreary winter months went by, while the deep snow filled up lands and meadows, and covered the great mountains from summit to base, and all around Martinswand was quite still, and now and then the post went by to Zirl, and on the holy-days the bells tolled; that was all. His mother sat between the stove and his bed with a sore heart; and his father as he went to and fro between the walls of beaten snow, from the wood-shed to the cattle-byre, was sorrowful, thinking to himself the child would die, and join that earlier Findelkind whose home was with the saints.

But the child did not die.

He lay weak and wasted and almost motionless a long time; but slowly, as the spring-time drew near, and the snows on the lower hills loosened, and the abounding waters coursed green and crystal-clear down all the sides of the hills, Findelkind revived as the earth did, and by the time the new grass was springing and the first blue of the gentian gleamed on the alps, he was well.

But to this day he seldom plays and scarcely ever laughs. His face is sad, and his eyes have a look of trouble.


Sometimes the priest of Zirl says of him to others,

"He will be a great poet or a great hero some day." Who knows?

Meanwhile, in the heart of the child there remains always a weary pain, that lies on his childish life as a stone may lie on a flower.

"I killed them!" he says often to himself, thinking of the two little white brothers frozen to death on Martinswand that cruel night; and he does the things that are told him, and is obedient, and tries to be content with the humble daily duties that are his lot, and when he says his prayers at bedtime always ends them so:

"Dear God, do let the little lambs play with the other Findelkind that is in heaven."


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